



# Newsletter

Dear All,

February seems to be one of the busiest months of the academic year for a lot of us. Work needs to be handed in, projects need to be wrapped up, exams need to be prepared for sooner rather than later, and, of course, all of this needs to fit in around our life outside academia. The Newsletter team hopes that you are successful in juggling all the different things in your life. And, if you struggle, don't be afraid to ask for help!

If you can fit yet another appointment into your diary than try to come to our next "Spotlight on" event planned for mid March. We will take a closer look at careers in clinical psychology, offering you the chance to informally talk to those working in the field. For those of you planning ahead: we will also have a "Spotlight on" in May, at which point we'll discuss how far a Masters can take you. You will be able to chat with current MSc (taught and research) students to find out if continuing with a Masters is something for you! We will keep you posted about both events on facebook and via email. Finally, keep your ears and eyes open to find out more about our 3rd year project poster day (planned for 19th of March) - you will have the chance to talk to current 3rd year students and find out more about their exciting research projects.

As for the newsletter: despite being extra busy, our frontrunner Keishema Kerr has found the time to write yet another interesting article for the newsletter. Read about research on sexual permissiveness on page 4. Also, don't forget to let us know if you'd like to work with us. We look forward to hearing from you!

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# Intuitive Colorimeter and precision tints

Image: Colorimeter (Cerium)



Psychology Prof Arnold Wilkins is the inventor of the Intuitive Colorimeter. The findings from the latest survey of optometrists who use the Intuitive Colorimeter and precision tints in routine optometric practice have just come out and are shared with all of us below:

Of the 37 optometrists who responded, 21 (57%) reported that they had used precision tints in the treatment of migraine, and they had seen an average of 21 patients each (range 1-100), about 400 patients in total. They estimated that an average of 86% of these patients had benefitted (range 40%-100%). This proportion is similar if weighted by the number of patients each optometrist had seen. Most significantly, 14 of the 21

(67%) reported that they had come across patients with aura who reported they were able to prevent or curtail their aura by wearing Precision Tints. All 21 reported that they thought tints beneficial - increasing "calmness" of vision on heady days, reducing aura and reducing (but not necessarily eliminating) migraine attacks. When asked how they would recognise a patient who was likely to benefit, 14/21 (67%) cited triggers such as fluorescent lights, bright light or flicker. There were several dramatic case histories.

It would appear that we can help patients who experience migraine, particularly if they report visual triggers.

## 60 seconds with...

**Rachel Grenfell-Essam**



**Would you rather be 3'5" or 7'5"?**

7 ft 5.

**Would you rather be able to speak any language fluently or talk to animals?**

Talk to animals as no-one can truly talk to animals so you'd be unique and it would be more helpful as you could spend your time reassuring sick and unwell animals that what the doctors were doing was to help them.

**Would you rather only being able to shout or only being able to whisper?**

Whisper as shouting would damage your voice and can be perceived as quite rude!

**Would you rather have a freakishly large smile or freakishly small nose?**

Smile.

**Would you rather be super fast or super strong?**

Super fast so that I could get to places much quicker and reduce commuting time.

**Would you rather have an third arm or a third eye?**

Third arm as is more helpful when struggling to carry objects.

**Would you rather always be hot or always cold?**

Always hot especially given the poor quality of our summers, I spend most of the year feeling cold!

**Would you rather have blue skin or purple skin?**

Purple because blue has been done before in Avatar!

**Would you rather watch a silent film or a film with subtitles?**

Film with subtitles.

**Would you rather be able to instantly boil an egg in your hands or perfectly mix squash on the first try?**

Squash as I don't eat boiled eggs so that would be no use to me.

**Would you rather have a forehead tattoo of a cartoon character of your choosing or never brush your teeth again?**

Teeth because a tattoo on your forehead is very visible and permanent, and there are ways around not brushing your teeth that still keep them clean.

**Would you rather only be able to eat cereal or only be able to eat toast?**

Toast.

**Would you rather be trapped in a room with a thousand spiders or a thousand cockroaches?**

Cockroaches as I really dislike spiders!

## Birds of a Feather? Not When It Comes to Sexual Permissiveness

Dr. Gerulf Rieger was a part of a study about sexual permissiveness that was published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* this year. Sexual permissiveness can range from frequent sexual acts to nonverbal cues like provocative clothing and is socially seen as undesirable characteristic for potential partners or even friendships. Studies have shown that hypothetical permissive targets were judged as less-desirable friends, partners and even viewed as less trustworthy and intelligent. This illustrates how sexual restraint is still valued despite our Western societies becoming more permissive over time.



The aim was to see if one's own sexual permissiveness could reduce or even reverse the re-occurring pattern of those who are sexually permissive being viewed negatively, specifically regarding a same sex friendship. This notion comes from the theory of positive assortment and homophily which is a preference for similarity as similarities in lifestyle are often the basis of forming friendships and relationships. Some studies have shown that permissive participants evaluated the dating desirability of hypothetical targets less harshly than non-permissive targets. However, these findings can be deemed inconsistent, as many other studies have not found similar outcomes with many finding no such effects or the effects only among women.

Over 700 participants with a mean age of 19.68 took part in the study, which involved a survey rating friendship attributes on a same sex friend. This was followed by each participants being given almost identical paragraphs describing a hypothetical person of the same sex, the only difference being the person having either 2 or 20 sexual partners, followed by a set of questions to measure their own permissiveness. The research outcomes found that preferences were rarely reversed. Some of the findings follow:

- Women and non-permissive men rated permissive lower on friendship desirability
- Permissive targets were preferred less in regards to morality when compared to non-permissive
- Extraversion was the only dimension where permissive targets were preferred

For the full report: *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* February 2014 vol. 31 no. 1 93-113  
Entitled: Birds of a feather? Not when it comes to sexual permissiveness

# Looking for volunteers!

## Study on body image

It is National Eating Disorders Awareness week from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March (see: <http://www.b-eat.co.uk/support-us/get-involved/eating-disorders-awareness-week/>) and fittingly, PhD student Katie Groves is finding volunteers for a research on body image and its relationship to Anorexia and Bulimia.

The study at the Department of Psychology is supported by Beat, the national organisation which provides helplines, online support and a network of UK-wide self-help groups to help adults and young people in the UK beat their eating disorders.

The research is investigating questions about visual body perception and if this is related to thoughts people have about their own body and those of others.

Katie is seeking women aged between 17 and 45 who have been diagnosed with, or received formal counselling for, Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia Nervosa.

If you are currently receiving treatment you should discuss participation with your clinician before contacting Katie.

For more information go to: [www.b-eat.co.uk/support-us/get-involved/research/take-part/body-image-in-anorexia-and-bulimia/](http://www.b-eat.co.uk/support-us/get-involved/research/take-part/body-image-in-anorexia-and-bulimia/) or email: [edstudy@essex.ac.uk](mailto:edstudy@essex.ac.uk)

## Study on how a history of alcohol abuse can impact on emotional communication

MSc by Dissertation student Chelsea Harmsworth is looking into emotional communication abilities in dry alcoholics, that is alcoholics who have abstained from alcohol over a certain period.

She is seeking volunteers to take part in two studies:

1. Usage of emotional tone of voice: for this project individuals need to say non-sense sentences (e.g., He nestered the flugs) in six different emotions (e.g. happy or angry tone of voice) while they are recorded.

2. Recognising the tone of voice: In this task individuals will be required to take part in a computer task where they hear a number of non-sense sentences and have to make a decision about what kind of emotional tone the speaker of the sentences is using.

Approximate time to complete each experimental session is about 1 hour and volunteers will receive £5 for their time. Ideally, volunteers would be prepared to participate in both projects.