

Recruiting participants for a research project investigating the influence of physical fitness and cognitive reserve on executive and olfactory functioning

WHY

This research aims to investigate the influence of physical fitness and cognitive reserve on executive and olfactory functioning (ie the capacity of smelling) in older adults. Given the well-known association between aging and cognitive/olfactory decline, studying how optimal cognitive reserve or physical fitness may prevent this decline is of great relevance.

WHAT

The study involves a single 90-minute testing session, in which participants will be asked to complete a battery of cognitive tests as well as self-reported and objective measures of physical fitness, and an assessment of olfactory functioning.

HOW

- To assess cognitive functioning, a number of cognitive tests will be administered by the researcher.
- To measure physical fitness, a combination of questionnaires and objective measures will be taken. This will involve measuring pulse and oxygen saturation using an *oximeter*, assessing upper limb strength through a *dynamometer*, measuring lower limb strength through a 30-second chair-to-stand test and measuring balance using a standardised test assessing balance abilities over 60 seconds.
- Olfactory function will be measured using 12 sticks scented with everyday odors, that will allow to assess olfactory threshold and discrimination.

WHERE

The study will take place at Birkbeck, University of London at the Bloomsbury Central London Campus (see map below). Testing will take place in room EB03 and researchers will greet participants at the ground floor entrance.

Address:

*Birkbeck, University of London
Malet Street, Bloomsbury
London WC1E 7HX*

WHEN

Data collection will be conducted throughout May and June of the current year. Testing days will be Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 09:00 to 19:00 or Thursdays and Fridays from 17:00 to 19:00. Researchers will do their best to accommodate to your availability.

WHO

This study will recruit participants of 60+ years of age with English as first language, normal vision and hearing (you are still eligible if you require glasses to see or a hearing aid to hear), no current psychiatric disorders (e.g. Schizophrenia, depression), no history of neurological disorders or diseases (e.g. stroke, head injury, epilepsy) and no reading disabilities.

Ethics and Data

The ethics protocol for this research was reviewed by Birkbeck, University of London which provided clearance to carry out the research. Please note that your participation to the study is entirely voluntary and you will have the right to end your participation in the study at any time, for any given reason. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, all the information you have provided will be destroyed. Your data will be anonymized and your responses will be kept confidential. As a token of appreciation for your time, you will be provided £15 for your participation.

Contact

If you have any questions about the study or would be interested to take part in this research, please contact the researchers Monika McAtarsney-Kovacs and Isabella Rizzo on mkovac04@mail.bbk.ac.uk

Where to find us: Please find the experiment location indicated in red in the map below.

- **BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** Birkbeck is surrounded by Tube and mainline rail stations: we are close to Russell Square, Tottenham Court Road, King's Cross/St Pancras and Euston. Many buses pass down nearby Gower Street or go via Russell Square.
- **BY CAR:** If you are planning your journey by car, please bear in mind that the Congestion Charge applies, while central London parking facilities are limited.

