



Plain Language Participant Information Sheet

This research is being carried out as part of a Doctoral Degree at the Technological University of the Shannon, Athlone.

Study Title: Investigating the Experiences of Irish Coaches working with Female Athletes.

Primary Investigator: Ms. Niamh Fogarty

Supervisors: Dr Niamh Ní Chéilleachair; Dr Ciarán Ó Catháin; Dr Aoife Lane

What is the aim of the study?

This research aims to investigate the experiences of Irish coaches working with female athletes, with a particular focus on the menstrual cycle. Through means of interview, this study seeks to (1) explore coaches' perceptions of the menstrual cycle and its impact on sports performance and participation; (2) identify the current support(s) that coaches provide to their female athletes around the menstrual cycle; (3) identify the barriers and facilitators to effective delivery of menstrual cycle-related support to female athletes; and (4) identify areas where coaches may need further support/training with regards to the menstrual cycle.

What will the study involve?

Phase 1: Complete Recruitment Questionnaire: If you wish to take part in this study, you will be requested to fill in a recruitment questionnaire comprising seven demographic questions (i.e., age, gender, language proficiency, current residency, current coaching role, and coaching experience with female athletes).

Phase 2: Pre-Interview Questionnaire: If you meet the criteria for an interview, the primary investigator (Niamh Fogarty) will get in contact. Once you confirm your participation, you will then be asked to fill in a pre-interview questionnaire. This will collect additional information relating to the female athlete(s) you coach (i.e., age range, sport, and competitive level).

Phase 3: Individual Interview:

You will be required to take part in an individual interview (approximately 45 minutes), hosted by the primary investigator. The interview will be conducted either face to face or online (Zoom) as appropriate, at a pre-scheduled time that suits you. Before the interview begins, you will receive a recap of the study protocol, have an opportunity to ask questions, and will be required to fill out a consent form.

To help direct the interview, a topic guide has been developed which will touch on the following areas:

1. Your perceived knowledge of the menstrual cycle and experience working with female athletes.
2. Your perceptions of the menstrual cycle in relation to sports performance and participation.
3. The supports you receive and provide to female athletes around the menstrual cycle.
4. Areas where you may need further support/training in relation to the menstrual cycle.

The interview will be audio recorded to enable the researcher to listen back and transcribe the data for further analysis. However, all participants will be given a unique identifier code that only the primary investigator and has access to (see 'how will my data be used' for more information), which will ensure that your identity remains anonymous. In addition, you may stop the interview at any stage, without reason or judgement, and the audio recording can be stopped at any stage.

Do I have to take part in this study?

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time, without reason, or prior notice.

What are the benefits?

Everyone that participates will be offered an opportunity to express their opinions. This interview may offer coaches time to reflect about their experiences and current practices regarding their work with female athletes and the menstrual cycle. Additionally, it may improve the comfort of discussion around the menstrual cycle.

Are there any risks?

Participants may experience some embarrassment and/or discomfort when discussing the topic of the menstrual cycle. Additionally, female coaches will be asked to reflect on their own menstrual cycle experiences which may result in embarrassment or discomfort. Please note that you are not obliged to answer any question. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you can move on to the next question.

How will my data be used?

This research is funded by Sport Ireland and therefore the data collected during this study will be submitted in the format of a research report to Sport Ireland upon completion of the study. Additionally, your data will be used for intended research purposes as part of a doctoral degree. This may include use for posters/presentations delivered at a conference and/or publication in an academic journal. Written reports and publications will include direct quotations from the interviews. However, all data collected during this study is strictly confidential and all published data will remain anonymous to facilitate strict participant confidentiality. To ensure anonymity, participants will be given a unique identifier code that only the primary investigator and primary supervisor have access to.

How will my data be stored?

Information collected during this study will be stored securely and safely on an encrypted hard drive and in accordance with Data Protection Act (1998). Data will be stored up to 5 years after the study has ended or until publication of results and destroyed thereafter.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to the study, please get in touch using the contact details below. Should you wish to contact someone independent, you may contact the Chairperson of the TUS Research Ethics Committee (Mary McDonnell-Naughton) at mmcdonnell@ait.ie

Primary Investigator Contact Details:

Ms. Niamh Fogarty – A00263681@student.ait.ie 0892497584

Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Niamh Ní Chéilleachair- niamh.nicheilleachair@tus.ie 090-6442594

Dr Aoife Lane – aoife.lane@tus.ie
Dr Ciarán Ó Catháin - ciarap.ocathain@tus.ie

090-6442594

090-6442594