University of South Australia

Participant Information Sheet

Experiences of hearing loss and tinnitus following acute COVID-19 infection

Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre, University of South Australia
UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: 205852

Investigators:
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What does my participation involve?
You are invited to take part in this research project, as you have identified yourself as experiencing hearing loss, tinnitus, or some form of hearing disturbance following an acute COVID-19 infection or vaccination. Participation involves completing this survey; answering multiple-choice and free-text questions about your symptoms, experiences with treatment and healthcare, its impact on your life, and how this may have changed your perception of COVID-19. We estimate that the questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, however as several questions are free text and you are encouraged to provide as much detail as you would like, completion time may vary.

Who is conducting this research?
This survey is being conducted by researchers from the Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre (RBRC) at the University of South Australia (UniSA). More information about the RBRC can be found here.

What is the purpose of this research?
The aim of this study is to explore and understand your experience with COVID-19-related hearing loss/tinnitus, and the impact that this had on your personal, professional, and social life. The findings of this study are intended to be used by health professionals to better inform them about hearing loss/tinnitus related to COVID-19 and improve care.

Do I have to take part?
Participation is completely voluntary. Your decision to complete this survey will remain anonymous. Consent will be gathered electronically, and by commencing and submitting the survey you are giving your consent to participate. You may withdraw from the survey at any time, and any incomplete surveys will be deleted once the survey close date has passed. Please note that once you submit your survey we will be unable to remove your responses as it will be impossible to identify your individual data.

What are the risks of taking part?
It is not anticipated that there are any risks associated with participating in this study beyond those encountered in everyday life, however, as the survey will ask you to recall potentially distressing memories there is potential for the themes to cause some stress. If any themes present in this questionnaire impact you or bring up any distressing memories, we urge you to please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1800 512 348 at any time or similar mental health services in your country. Additionally, there may also be questions that include providing sensitive or personal information. Should you feel uncomfortable providing any information you are welcome to skip the question or close the survey.

What will happen to the information I provide?
All questionnaire data will be de-identified and names will be substituted for a numeric code. Further, all responses will be carefully screened and any potentially identifying information will be removed or adjusted. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to the identification of any individual will be released, unless as required by law. Please note that the researcher cannot guarantee the confidentiality or anonymity of material transferred by email or the Internet. All data will be stored on the secure UniSA server (with restricted access by authorised investigators only) for 5 years after publication, in line with the University's policy and requirements set out in the 'Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research', then confidentially deleted when the required storage time has lapsed. Re-identifiable (coded) data may be used as comparative data in future projects, for which ethics approval will be sought. The findings from the research may be published and/or presented in a variety of forums including reports, academic journals, and conferences.

Who has reviewed the research project?
This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Protocol 205852) as required by the Australian government research requirements, specified in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

Further information and who to contact:
The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query. If you want any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the project, you can contact the researcher or any of the following people:

Research contact person

Name	Kim Gibson
Position	Project Co-Lead
Telephone	+61 8 830 22706
Email	kim.gibson@unisa.edu.au

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about being a research participant in general, please contact:

Reviewing HREC approving this research and HREC Executive Officer details

Reviewing HREC name	University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee
HREC Executive Officer	Human Ethics Officer
Telephone	+618 8302 6330
Email	humanethics@unisa.edu.au

A summary of the results will be available to participants once data analysis has been completed. Should you want a copy of the summary or the final research report, please contact the Chief Investigator, Kim Gibson, by email at kim.gibson@unisa.edu.au and you will receive a copy once they become available.