



Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP)

Invitation to participate in hair cortisol survey

Dear Educator

We invite you to participate in this pilot project investigating the feasibility of using hair samples to measure the stress hormone cortisol.

We know that stress levels among early childhood educators can be high, but the research tools we have used to measure educator stress (like questionnaires) tend to be subjective. To objectively measure educator stress, some researchers have collected saliva samples from educators to test cortisol levels. However, the collection of saliva and use of salivary cortisol is problematic, especially given the context of COVID-19.

Another way to measure cortisol is through hair samples, but we do not know if collecting hair samples would be acceptable to educators. Consequently, we are asking for your assistance to:

- (i) help us determine if educators would be willing to provide a small sample of hair
- (ii) trial the collection and analysis of hair samples from educators.

There are two parts to the study.

Part 1: Survey

Part 1 is a survey about your views on whether educators would be willing to provide a small hair sample for the measurement of the stress hormone cortisol. You will be provided with a description of the proposed process to collect hair samples and then asked to answer four questions. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses from the survey will be completely anonymous.

At the end of the survey, you will be invited to participate in Part 2 of the project. It is important to know that if you complete the survey, you *do not* have to participate in Part 2.

Part 2: Hair samples

Part 2 is the collection of hair samples from 20 participants living in the Sydney Metropolitan region. This will involve a researcher visiting educators at a mutually agreed upon place, to collect (cut) a small sample of hair from the back of their head. Further information about this part of the project will be provided in the survey.

Completion of the survey and participation in the project collecting hair samples is completely voluntary.

If you would like to complete the survey, please click [here](https://limesurvey.mq.edu.au/index.php/571189)

<https://limesurvey.mq.edu.au/index.php/571189>

Thinking about educator stress can raise concerns for some people. If this invitation has raised any concerns for you, please contact someone like:

- your health provider
- your Employment Assistance Program
- an organisation like [Beyond Blue](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
www.beyondblue.org.au
1300 224 636

Thank you for your assistance!

The ECEWP Research Team

If you have any questions, please contact us at ecewp@mq.edu.au