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**The School of Psychology, Flinders University  
and the  
School of Paediatrics and Reproductive Health  
The University of Adelaide**

### **Information for participants**

#### **Investigating the effect of behavioural therapy on mu frequency oscillations in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**Associate Professor Michael Ridding (The University of Adelaide), Miss Anna Moffat (Flinders University), Associate Professor Robyn Young (Flinders University)**

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether teaching a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to imitate leads to underlying changes in the physiology associated with imitation ability. As you may know, children with ASD typically find it difficult to imitate motor actions. This deficit is thought to have implications for a number of other skills that are also typically impaired in individuals with ASD. Therefore further investigation of how these skills are acquired is important.

Currently, research shows that the physiology thought to underlie imitation ability is different in children with ASD, compared to children who are typically functioning. Despite this, it is possible to teach children with ASD to imitate using behavioural therapy techniques such as Applied Behaviour Analysis and Systematic Behaviour Management. We are interested in finding out whether the acquisition of these skills in children with ASD influences the underlying physiology associated with imitation ability. These findings may help us to better understand the cause of impaired imitation ability in ASD, and may also give us further insight into how skills are acquired in this population.

We are inviting you to participate in this research but whether you wish to or not is entirely up to you. Whether you take part or not, your relationship with the university and/or the services which you receive will not be affected in any way.

Children aged between 2.5 and 7 years old, who have a diagnosis of Autism (whether currently involved in a behavioural therapy program or not) are eligible to

participate. Each subject will be required to attend on one occasion only. This session is expected to take no more than 1 hour and you will be reimbursed \$30 for your time and parking costs. All testing will take place at The Robinson Institute (77 King William Road, Adelaide) which is directly opposite the Women's and Children's Hospital.

At the testing session, A/Prof Robyn Young or Miss Anna Moffat will administer some standard assessment tools (including the Childhood Autism Rating Scale and the Social Communication Questionnaire- Current) which will provide measures of your child's current level of functioning. Children will then be seated in a comfortable chair (where they can watch a DVD if desired) and electroencephalogram (EEG) recordings will be taken using surface electrodes. This is a safe, non-invasive way of measuring brain waves. A short (approximately 10 minute) imitation task will then be conducted with your child while further EEG recordings are taken.

Your child will be videotaped during the behavioural tasks. This is so we can score your child's performance accurately. A research assistant (who is unaware of which research group your child is in) will score these videotapes to ensure validity and reliability of data. Be assured that they will not know your name or any other identifying information. These tapes will be stored at Flinders University with no identifying information. All other data collected in the study will be stored in a de-identified format so confidentiality is assured.

It is very unlikely that your child will experience any discomfort during a testing session. We are aware, however, that remaining seated for an extended period may be difficult for some children. Should the child become upset at any point, sessions will only be continued in consultation with the parent/guardian.

If you suffer injury as a result of participation in this research or study, compensation might be paid without litigation. However, such compensation is not automatic and you may have to take legal action to determine whether you should be paid.

The results of this study will constitute part of a doctoral thesis, and may result in conference papers or publications in peer reviewed journals. Be assured that information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and that participants will not be able to be identified in any of the resulting publications. You are entirely free to request that certain information be used in selected ways or omitted completely and are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your child's participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Please let the researchers know if you have any questions or comments. You can contact them on the numbers provided below if you have any questions or concerns following participation in the study. After hours numbers are also provided.

Miss Anna Moffat, Flinders University, 8201 2565 (work), 0402 041 912 (after hours), [anna.moffat@flinders.edu.au](mailto:anna.moffat@flinders.edu.au) (email)

Associate Professor Michael Ridding, 8303 7592

Associate Professor Robyn Young, 8201 5104 (work)

*This study has been reviewed by the Flinders Clinical Research Ethics Committee. If you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular in relation to policies, your rights as a participant, or should you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the executive officer on 8204 4507 or email [research.ethics@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:research.ethics@health.sa.gov.au)*