



THE TAP

Technology, Anxiety, Pain

*April 2022
Issue 9*



STAGE 2 FEEDBACK

As mentioned in my previous newsletter, I passed my Stage 2 Report and Viva at the end of February. As part of passing this stage, my supervisory panel put together a feedback document outlining some areas they would like me to focus on as I continue my research.

I have been spending time going through this feedback and I have already started to put into action some of the points made. For example, one suggestion was to use an additional method for analysing the data collected in my questionnaire study. I have been researching how to implement this method, as well as gaining an understanding of what this additional analysis method will tell me. I believe it is really important to fully understand an analysis method before you implement it yourself. I am now at the stage where I will be able to apply this method, allowing me to interrogate my data from a different direction.

QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

I have continued to work on the analysis of the data collected as part of my questionnaire study.

This study generated vast amounts of data which means that it takes a long time to analyse. This means that it is very easy to get 'lost' in the data and struggle to draw out conclusions.

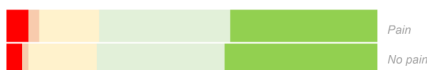
I have recently found that I have become 'lost'. To find my way again I have taken a step back from looking at the fine details of the data, and instead, I have been working on different ways to visualise the data so that I can more easily see what it is telling me.

I have created a series of coloured charts for each area of my data. This has proved extremely useful and I feel like I once again have a strong grip on my data and I am now ready to once again delve deeper.

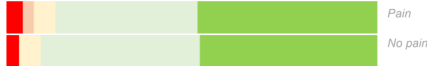
MOTIVATORS



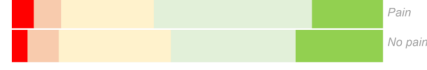
Has strong scientific backing



Freedom to interact as and when needed



Gives a specific task to complete



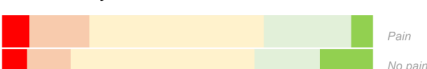
Information is relevant to my situation



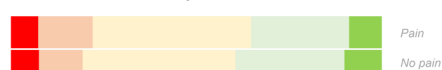
Allows for personal autonomy



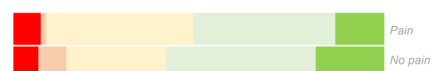
Endorsed by a doctor



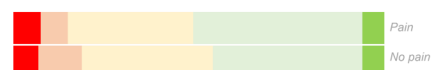
Endorsement from my doctor



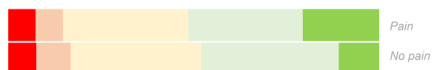
Other people I know are finding it useful



Told other people are finding it useful



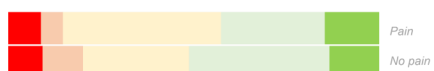
Entertaining to use



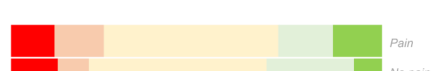
Can be used with a smartwatch



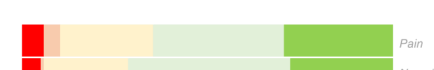
Aesthetically pleasing



Been using it for a long time



Helps quickly



AUTISM AWARENESS

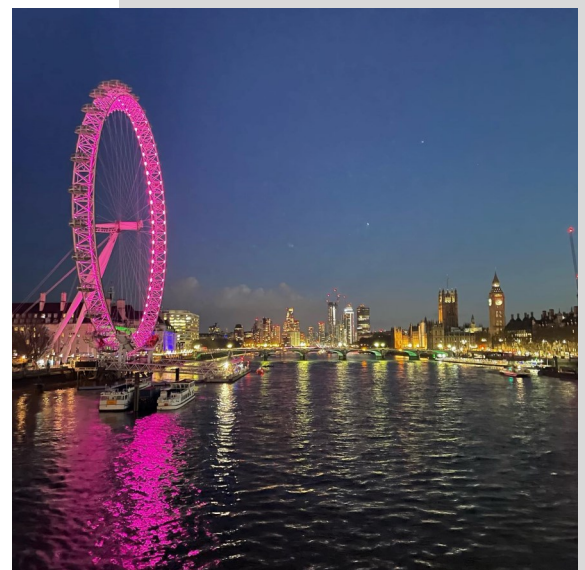
As Disabled and Specific Learning Differences Rep at university, I have been running a series called 'Disability Spotlight'. Spotlights are posted to coincide with awareness days/weeks to bring awareness to a variety of different disabilities, illnesses and learning differences. As well as sharing information, I also post a quote from someone who is affected.

The final week of March marked Autism Acceptance Week, with the awareness day falling on Saturday 2nd April. On World Autism Awareness Day, the spotlight quote came from me.

This was the first time I had ever spoken publicly about my Autism diagnosis, and it felt like a very important moment for me. On the next page, you can read what I shared.

To further celebrate Autism Acceptance Week I organised a Q&A event at Queen Mary called 'Autism: See Past the Stereotype' which aimed to give students the opportunity to hear about what life is like for someone with autism. You can catch a recording of the discussion by following the link on my website.

I also took part in the London Spectrum 10km Night Walk alongside my sister. We were able to smash our fundraising target, receiving a total of £380 of sponsorship for the National Autistic Society.



“In 2019, at the age of 24, I was diagnosed with autism.

Since I was a child I always felt like there was something different about me, that everyone seemed to naturally be able to do things that I found difficult. It was only as I reached adulthood that I started to research why this might be - when I read about autism, I ticked all of the boxes.

Receiving my diagnosis I felt an overwhelming sense of relief – I wasn't crazy! There was a reason for my difficulties and it wasn't because I didn't try hard enough; my brain just works differently.

The relief didn't last. It is hard to admit, but I felt ashamed. I felt as though I was somehow less of a person, that I was broken in some way. I feared that people would see the label 'autism' and make assumptions about me. I didn't want people to treat me differently.

That is why I have never spoken openly about my autism, and why I can count on one hand the number of people I've talked to about it.

However, since my diagnosis, I have learned a lot about autism. I've gained more understanding of the way my brain works, and I've learned to be kinder to myself. I no longer berate myself when I find something challenging - I just find a different way that works for me.

The unwavering support of those around me has helped me gain the confidence I needed to accept that I am autistic and to be proud of it. They have never treated me differently and have shown only care and compassion when I have struggled. No words can ever thank them enough.

I have decided to share my autism diagnosis now as I no longer want to feel like I am hiding part of me – I am no longer ashamed of who I am. People with autism deserve to be understood and accepted.

I am autistic, but I am still me.”

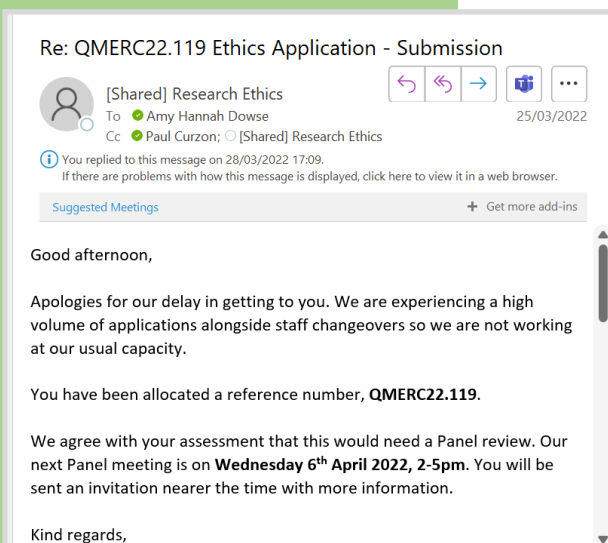
TESTING 'HERE'

I successfully completed and submitted my ethics application for my study looking at the use of my app, 'Here'.

I am fortunate that my second supervisor is also heavily involved in reviewing ethics applications at Queen Mary so I was able to review my application with him before submission to ensure it was as strong as possible.

My application will be reviewed at the next ethics meeting, taking place this month. I will then be notified of the outcome, and once any outstanding queries have been addressed, I will be able to start the recruitment for this study. I will update you on the outcome in the next newsletter.

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THE FLYING SCOTSMAN

Towards the end of March, I spent the day in Salisbury with my family, travelling there on the Flying Scotsman. It was a really fun experience travelling on such an iconic steam train, and waving at all of the people gathered at the stations to see the train go past. Even though it is nearly 100 years old it was more punctual than the trains I catch into London! Salisbury was a beautiful city - we were lucky enough to have beautiful sunshine the whole day - and we were able to visit the Cathedral, marvel at the Magna Carter and explore the surrounding area.

