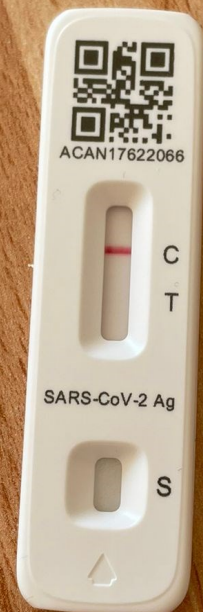
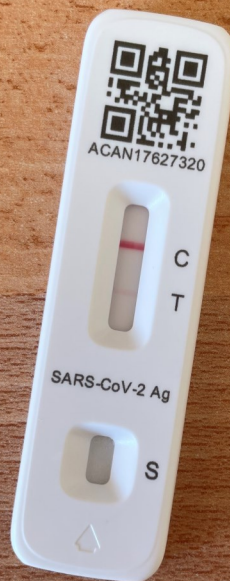
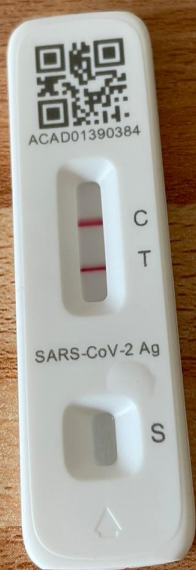




# THE TAP

Technology, Anxiety, Pain

September 2022  
Issue 14



## COVID

On Wednesday 3rd August I tested positive for COVID-19.

Thankfully, my symptoms were fairly mild - much like flu. I struggled with body aches the first few days but after taking some painkillers I was much more comfortable. I also lost my sense of smell and taste which felt very strange. For example, when I drank fresh orange juice, it could have been water - there was absolutely no taste to it. The thing that I struggled most with though was the tiredness. Even doing simple tasks, like taking a shower, zapped all of my energy and I was left feeling exhausted.

Luckily none of my family tested positive which was a massive relief. I tested positive for 12 days - towards the end I was confident that each test would be negative, only to be disappointed when I saw a line. But once I was negative I was free to interact closely with my family again and leave the house - it felt fantastic! As a result of the tiredness from COVID I had two weeks away from my research but now I am fully recovered and I am back on track.

# h

If you experience

## ANXIETY, WITH OR WITHOUT CHRONIC PAIN

test our app - does it fit  
into your daily life?



Aged 18+



Currently living in the UK



Experience of Anxiety



Own an iPhone

Register your  
interest



[www.bit.ly/herestudy](http://www.bit.ly/herestudy)

*If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Amy Dowse:  
[a.h.dowse@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:a.h.dowse@qmul.ac.uk)*

### TESTING 'HERE' STUDY

I have continued to work on recruiting participants for my study - at the time of writing I have eight participants who are now using my app, 'Here', for the next four weeks. I am really happy with the current level of participation, but I still need more people to get involved.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please do register your interest using the link: [www.bit.ly/herestudy](http://www.bit.ly/herestudy). I would also be hugely grateful if you could share this study with other people who meet the eligibility criteria above and may be interested in taking part.

If you have any questions or would like further details about my research, please do not hesitate to contact me.



# JOURNAL ARTICLE

I have been working on writing the results of my questionnaire study as a journal article. It is a huge help in the future if I am able to get published so I have been working hard on making it as good as I can.

I have never written a journal article before so it has been a bit of a learning curve - journals are very specific about what they want and how they want it presented so I've spent a lot of time reading over the author guidance to make sure I am doing everything that they want.

I have finished my first draft and sent it to my supervisor for their comments. I am sure that my supervisor will provide a lot of points of work which will be really helpful - they have published a number of times so any advice or critique will be much appreciated.

## Willingness, Motivators and Barriers to using Anxiety-focused Apps in people with and without chronic pain: A Questionnaire Study.

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Research suggests that the use of mobile apps to support people with anxiety is a widely popular idea. Despite willingness to use such apps being common, an understanding of what motivates or stops people from using anxiety-focused apps is lacking. Anxiety is rarely seen in isolation, it often cooccurs alongside another condition, such as chronic pain. There is also a gap in knowledge surrounding comorbid anxiety and chronic pain, and what effects the presence of pain has on people's views on anxiety-focused apps.

**Objective:** The aims of the study were to determine the willingness, motivators, and barriers of UK anxiety sufferers in using an anxiety-focused app, and to determine where the views of patients differ between those who experience anxiety alone and those who experience anxiety and chronic pain.

**Methods:** A digital questionnaire was shared online and completed by adults, currently living in the UK who experienced anxiety between June and December 2021. The questionnaire asked for levels of agreement on statements about willingness, motivators, and barriers to using anxiety-focused apps.

**Results:** The 187 completed, usable, questionnaires showed a high level of willingness to use anxiety-focused apps, with 72.7% (n=136) liking the idea of using an app to help with their anxiety. Respondents were particularly motivated to use anxiety-focused apps if it had strong scientific backing (75.4%, n=141), it helped them quickly (69.0%, n=129), included relevant information to the user's situation (63.4%, n=150), and allowed for independent use (69.3%, n=167). Barriers to use included the app being hard to use (68.4%, n=128), and concerns around security (56.1%, n=105). There was no evidence that views of patients differ between those who experience anxiety alone and those who experience anxiety and chronic pain.

**Conclusions:** There is widespread willingness among UK adults who experience anxiety to use anxiety-focused apps, and they are motivated to do so when an app is effective and works quickly. There are still barriers which stop them from using anxiety apps, particularly around data security. There is no strong evidence that the views of patients differ about anxiety-focused apps between those who experience anxiety alone and those who experience chronic pain.

### KEYWORDS

mHealth; mobile health; eHealth; digital health; digital technology; anxiety; chronic pain; apps

### INTRODUCTION

Mental health apps are being recognised as a new frontier for delivering mental health treatment [1]. The use of apps for mental health treatment is a rapidly growing area and offers the potential for successful, cost-effective, wide-reaching treatment. They have quickly become the most widely available form of self-help psychoeducation that the general population can access [2]. They have been shown to have huge potential reach - in a 2010 survey, 76% of 525 people asked stated that they would be interested in using their phones for self-management and self-monitoring of their mental health [3].

Anxiety-focused apps is one area of mental health apps which has been rapidly growing in popularity. In 2019, Lipschitz and colleagues conducted a questionnaire study looking at patients' interest and barriers to engagement with regards to the adoption of mobile apps for depression and anxiety [4]. This study found that the majority of participants were interested in using an app for mental illness and identified three key concerns which acted as barriers to using mental health apps - lack of proof of efficacy, concerns around data privacy, and not knowing where to find an app. However, this study only focused on respondents' interest and barriers to using an anxiety or depression-focused app, investigation into what factors actively encourage respondents to interact with such apps was never undertaken.

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to determine the if UK adults with anxiety are willing to use anxiety-focused apps, identify what factors motivate them to use an anxiety-focused app as well as what factors act as barriers to using such apps.



## NEW SOCIETY

I have been working hard on setting up my new society, 'Students with Disabilities' ready for the start of term. I have focused on creating our page on the Students' Union website. I am really proud of how it looks and I hope it will encourage students to consider joining our society. I will be continually updating the webpage over the year so that it is up to date and useful for students.

If you are interested, you can view the society webpage: <https://www.qmsu.org/groups/swd/>

## DOING WHAT I LOVE

On the 1st August, my family and I spent the day exploring Oxford - it is a beautiful city full of fascinating history and architecture. We made use of the City Tour Bus so were able to see lots of different areas.

Towards the end of August, once I had recovered from COVID, we had lots of exciting trips. First, we went to see 'Dear Evan Hansen' in the West End before it closes in October. I have seen this show once before and absolutely loved it so had to see it again before it closed. This show means so much to me as it talks about social anxiety which is something that I struggle with.

Secondly, my sister and I spent a morning at an Aqua Park - this is an inflatable obstacle course in the middle of a lake (think Total Wipeout, but colder water). It was such a fun experience filled with a lot of laughing and a lot of time falling into the lake and climbing back on! It was physically very tiring but I absolutely loved it.

Finally, we went to see 101 Dalmatians at the Regents Park Open Air Theatre. This show was fantastic! I wasn't sure what to expect as it was a musical and the original Disney film wasn't, but it was amazing! The songs were catchy, the singing was superb and the puppetry was so realistic - we found ourselves not even noticing the puppeteer and just looking at the dogs. To top it all off, right at the end they brought on a real life dalmatian puppy - it was so cute. I love dalmatians so this was such an unexpected extra treat.

