

Research Recruitment Request Form

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Supervisors: Prof. Peter Howell & Dr. Ria Bernard

Project title: Understanding anxiety in children who stammer: the role of social experiences and support

Study overview: Some children who stammer may experience anxiety, while others may not, and we do not yet fully understand why. This study explores whether children who stammer experience higher anxiety than their fluent peers, and whether social experiences, such as speaking difficulties, bullying or teasing, and support from others, help explain this. We hope the findings will improve understanding of anxiety in children who stammer and help parents, teachers, and speech and language therapists provide better support.

Ethics number: 0447 (the evidence is attached in the email)

Study adverts:

Dear parents or caregivers,

I am Zhixing Yang, a doctoral student in the Department of Experimental Psychology at University College London. Thank you for taking the time to read this advert. Our research team, led by Principal Investigator (PI) Professor Peter Howell, focuses on understanding why some children who stammer may experience anxiety under certain circumstances and the link between children's anxiety, if present, and associated social factors. We aim to use our findings to empower professionals and parents of children who stammer to foster a supportive social environment for children. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses are invaluable and will help us better understand these complex issues. Everything you share will be kept confidential, and we are here to support you in any way we can. Please find the study details below.

Study title:

Understanding anxiety in children who stammer: the role of social experiences and support

Background and aim:

Some children who stammer may experience anxiety, while others may not, and we do not yet fully understand why. This study explores whether children who stammer experience higher anxiety than their fluent peers, and whether social experiences, such as speaking difficulties, bullying or teasing, and support from others, help explain this.

We hope the findings will improve understanding of anxiety in children who stammer and help parents, teachers, and speech and language therapists provide better support.

Who can take part:

We are inviting parents or caregivers and their children aged **7-16 years** who stammer to take part. We will confirm eligibility during the screening stage.

What to expect:

The study has two stages.

Stage 1: Screening

After parent consent and child assent have been obtained, parents or caregivers will complete a short screening questionnaire about their child's eligibility and background, including demographic information. The researcher will then arrange a brief online meeting with the child to complete a short speech task, with a parent or caregiver present. This stage helps us confirm whether the child is eligible for the main study as a child who stammers. Families will be informed of the screening outcome within five working days.

Stage 2: Main study

Families who are eligible after screening will be invited to take part in the main study. This can be completed either online or in person at University College London (UCL), 26 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AQ. Parent consent and child assent will be confirmed again before the main study begins.

Children will complete some speech tasks, such as talking about a neutral social topic, and age-appropriate questionnaires about their feelings, anxiety, and social experiences. Parents or caregivers will also complete a questionnaire about their child's experiences and background.

Incentives:

Families will receive a £5 gift voucher after completing the screening tasks, including the background questionnaire and online screening meeting. Families who are eligible and complete the main study will receive a further £10 gift voucher, making a total of £15 for those who complete both stages. Children who take part in person at our UCL lab will also receive a set of colourful themed stickers, with designs such as animals, vehicles, and sweet treats.

How to participate:

Participation is entirely voluntary. To find out more or express interest, please contact Miss Zhixing Yang at zhixing.yang.19@ucl.ac.uk In the email, please specify your children's age so that we will send you the age-appropriate information for taking part.