

Title of Project: *Effects of sugar vs sweetener on the brains reward system*

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We would be grateful to you if you could assist us by participating in our scanning study examining the effects of sugar and sweeteners on the brains reward system. Once you read the information and instructions we will ask whether you are willing to consent to take part in the study, by ticking a box. To reimburse you for the time and effort involved in participation we shall pay you £30 for your time.

Who can take part?

Participants without any psychiatric history can take part, we can assess this using an online Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders Schedule (SCID). We will also exclude anyone taking psychoactive medication, being left-handed, being a smoker, having food allergies, having diabetes and having a BMI outside the healthy range (18-25) or having any contraindications to fMRI scanning. You will be asked to taste some drinks to assess your sweet taste perception; if this is in the range we expect for the study, then you will be asked to take part in a fMRI scan. If your taste perception is outside of the range needed for the study we will not be able to include you in the scanning part of the study but we will still pay you for your time (£10).

Brief outline of tasks and procedure

The entire study will take in total approximately 1 to 2 hrs, with some more time allotted to traveling to and from the university. During the day of the MRI scan we will ask you to refrain from eating overnight if coming for a morning scan or fast for at least 3 h (no food, only water) for an afternoon scan so that a standardized breakfast/lunch can be offered. Food will consist of e.g., bagel, cream cheese, banana, orange juice, skim milk. Before scanning we will ask you to read a specific MRI information sheet and sign a consent form. During the scan itself you will be asked to taste some different drinks and rate them for their pleasantness whilst laying down in the scanner. We will practice this also before the scan to make sure you are comfortable with the process. Once the study has finished, we will give you a debriefing form and ask you to give us feedback about your study experience.

Your participation is voluntary

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary; you will be able to say that you wish to stop the testing and leave at any time, without giving a reason. This would not affect your relationship with the experimenters in any way. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have about this study at any point. The study will not benefit you directly, and does not form part of any medical diagnosis or treatment. If you agree to participate you will be asked to tick the consent box that accompanies this information sheet via an online form. It is perfectly in order for you to take time to consider whether to participate, or discuss the study with other people, before consenting. After consenting, you will still have the right to withdraw at any time before or during the experiment, without giving a reason.

Data confidentiality, storage and disposal of personal information

The data will be held securely and you will not be identified by name in any publications that might arise from the study. Your data will be kept confidential and securely stored, with only an anonymous number/QR code identifying it. Data collected from this study will be preserved and made available in anonymised form, so that data can be re-used by others.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is funded by the University of Reading.

Thank you for your help.