

Information on the processing of personal data

In connection with the project Motives and correlates of self-harm, SDU wants to collect information about people. The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) is responsible for the protection of personal data collected for the use in research projects. Participation in the project is voluntary. Collection takes place online via Surveyxact.

Purpose of processing information for the project

The purpose of the study is to examine motives and thoughts related to self-harm behaviour and engaging in different social media forums, platforms, communities, and accounts focused on self-harm (hereafter simply referred to as e-communities). We wish to examine factors related to self-harm and e-communities, including mental health, social interactions, thoughts, emotions, motives, and consequences. By doing so we hope to be able to gain knowledge on how self-harm behaviour is perceived by those who engage in it and how e-communities focusing on self-harm influence their members. We believe that through research and understanding we can learn to better help the many people who engage in self-harm in an attempt to deal with trauma and other challenges to mental health.

The main aims of the study are to:

1. Examine motives for and ways of engaging in self-harming behaviours, including why participants engage in self-harming, the role of dissociation in triggering episodes of self-harming, and motives for improvement, including what self-improvement would consist of in the eyes of those who engage in self-harming
2. Examine risk factors for and comorbidity in self-harming, including traumatic exposure, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), complex posttraumatic stress disorder (CPTSD), eating disorders, anxiety, depression, personality disorders, and suicidal ideation.
3. Examine motives for and gains from engaging in self-harm-focused social media forums, focusing specifically on why participants engage in such forums and what they gain, both positively and negatively, from viewing, interacting, commenting on, and sharing self-harming content
4. To examine the influence of gender and gender-related factors on self-harming in more detail, including gender as a potential moderator of the above described associations and the relevance of gender identity and sexual preference measured both as continuous and dichotomous measures in self-harm research. This part of the project is associated with another project that aims to test and validate a new measure of gender, gender identity, and sexual identity, and data collected here will also be used for this purpose.

The information being processed is:

- Information on self-harm including
 - Methods
 - Motives
 - Triggers
 - Thoughts, and feelings
- Exposure to potentially traumatic events
- Mental health (including PTSD, dissociation, personality disorder, suicidal thoughts, and others)
- Gender and sexuality
- Social interactions on and off social media
- Other data related to these topics that you wish to provide in response to our open-ended questions and/or during the interview if you take part in that.

How we use the information

SDU handles personal data with confidentiality in accordance with applicable law. The information will only be used for research purposes, while dissemination of research results will be conducted in anonymised form. We will make sure to keep the data secure so that only relevant researchers at SDU will have access to them. The information will be deleted or anonymised, which will be done within five years of completion of the project. This will be on or prior to December 31st 2027.

Will to participate

When using personal data for a research project, there are some specific provisions in the legislation that allow the collection and use of personal data without the consent of the participant. This can be found in the Danish Data Protection Act § 10 and the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 (1)(e).

These provisions allow us to use your personal data for research without your consent, but also prohibits the use of the information for purposes other than research and statistics. Therefore, there is no risk that your information will be used for other purposes.

These provisions also allow us to pass the information on to other research projects, but it will continue to be research on self-harm, mental health, e-forums, and/or gender.

Therefore, you must decide whether you want to participate in the project, in order for us to be able to use your information. By agreeing to participate, we will collect the information mentioned above and use it within the project. Should you, at some point in the process, no longer wish to participate, you can withdraw from the project. As a result, we will no longer collect new information about you, but we are still allowed to use the information we have already received. In special cases you can get your data deleted.

Additional information

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact project leader Dorte M. Christiansen at any time by calling +45 65 50 83 43 or emailing to dochristiansen@health.sdu.dk.

If you have any questions regarding data protection or your rights, you can contact our Data Protection Officer Simon Kamber by calling +45 65 50 39 06 or sending an email to dpo@sdu.dk.

If you wish to appeal about the processing of personal data, you can contact the Danish Data Protection Agency via www.datatilsynet.dk