



Letter of Information

Study Title: **University student mental health and well-being research:
From Evidence to Action**
Digitally-Enhanced Support

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anne Duffy
Division of Student Mental Health
Student Health Services
Department of Psychiatry
Queen's University

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Background and purpose of the study

You are invited to participate in a study investigating the *acceptability and efficiency of digitally-enhanced support for students seeking help for a mental health problem*. Specifically, we would like to evaluate the uptake, satisfaction and experience among students using a digital technology called i-spero® to self-monitor during otherwise standard care for a mental health problem at Queen's Student Wellness Services (QSWs). We are offering i-spero as part of our routine care, but we are also asking students to consider participating in this optional research project so that we can evaluate how acceptable and helpful the technology is for students. This study is funded by a grant from the Mach-Gaensslen Foundation and has been reviewed for ethical compliance by QSWs and the Queen's University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB) (PSIY-692-20).

What is i-spero® and how will it support self-monitoring during care?

i-spero is a digital technology that helps you self-monitor your care plan and symptoms through a series of short electronic questionnaires. The information you enter on i-spero will help you and your care provider(s) at QSWs monitor your progress. Your care plan is fully customizable and may include general health and wellbeing activities, talking therapies and/or medication. You will be prompted by the system to complete the electronic measures at regular intervals during your care and you can follow your self-reported symptoms and share this information with whomever you want – your family and friends, your local and/or QSWs doctor and/or your therapist. i-spero can send reminders to help you stay on track with your personalised care plan and inform you and your care provider(s) if your symptoms change.

What will happen in the study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate this will not impact the care you receive or your academic standing in any way. You can opt to use i-spero but not take part or withdraw from the optional research study. This is because QSWs is adopting i-spero on a trial basis as part of their routine practice for all students seeking help for their mental health. If you decide to take part in the optional research study after reading this Letter of Information, you will be asked to create a secure account in i-spero (<http://www.queensu.i-spero.com>) using your Queen's University email address (ending in @queensu.ca) and provide consent. A brief, introductory video will familiarize you with how to use i-spero and view your own electronically reported information.

Once set up in i-spero, you will be asked to complete brief electronic questionnaires that ask about your demographic information (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity), mental health history, early life experiences, family history, lifestyle (i.e. exercise, sleep, substance use), and current mental health and well-being. These questionnaires should take about 10 minutes to complete, but there is no time limit and you can take as long as you need.

At your first QSWS visit with an assigned mental health provider (i.e., counsellor, doctor or nurse), a care plan will be developed with you based on best practice guidelines. Once created, you, your care provider(s) and anyone you give access to, can view your care plan and self-reported electronic symptom ratings in i-spero.

Your care will depend on your clinical need and will follow standard best practice Canadian guidelines. i-spero will send automated messages based on your own entries to provide feedback and suggest appropriate resources or actions that you might find helpful. As part of the i-spero research pathway you will be asked to complete electronic questionnaires about your mental health, well-being and stress levels at 4, 8, 12 and 24 weeks after beginning participation. In addition, at 8 weeks following registration in i-spero, you will be asked to complete brief electronic questionnaires about your satisfaction and experience with using i-spero and any use of mental health services outside of your i-spero treatment care plan. These questionnaires should take about 10 minutes to complete, but again there is no time limit and you can take as long as you like.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

We feel risks are minimal in this study. We have also followed all regulations in terms of safeguarding your data (see Confidentiality and Research Data section below). Some of the questions in electronic surveys may cause upset or bring up painful memories. If you experience any distress from participating in this study you may stop the survey at any time or skip any upsetting questions. If your distress continues after leaving the survey, we have provided a list of supportive services that can be helpful at the end of this Letter. These resources are also listed at the end of each baseline survey, if signposted by i-spero, and on the Queen's Student Wellness Services website (<https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/resources>).

While i-spero will alert patients about high levels of symptoms or a stalled or worsening of clinical status, ***your symptom ratings in i-spero are not continuously monitored by the research team or by anyone at QSWS.*** Therefore, research participants are reminded that in the event of a crisis or emergency, they should seek help through local emergency or urgent care centres. There is also a 24-hour Crisis Line available at 613-544-4229.

If you are part of the i-spero research study and have a health or mental health care need that is not urgent, you can still access any campus or community care or support, including the QSWS walk-in clinic.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The care you receive as part of this study will be standard care in accordance with best practise Canadian guidelines; however, i-spero provides an interactive digital platform, which we hope will improve the quality of your experience and the efficiency of your care.

We hope that the findings from this study will help us together better understand the mental health care needs of university students and how this affects academic success. This information will help us to improve resources and services to support students moving forward.

Payment or reimbursement

Access to i-spero® is free of charge for all eligible help-seeking students, including those who consent to participate in the optional research study, through an in-kind contribution by P1Vital and through research grant funding. If you choose to participate in this research study, as a thank you for your participation in completing the study measures, you will be offered a Starbucks e-gift card worth \$5 for completed study measures up to 8-weeks and the opportunity to be entered into a draw for a chance to win 1 of 5 iPads for participants who complete the full 24-weeks of study measures.

Confidentiality and use of research data

Please be assured that your research data will be kept strictly confidential. For this study, we are collaborating with the University of Oxford and with other external groups (data processors) in the UK including P1Vital (the provider of i-spero), who will process the data you input. The collection of your personal identifiable information will be minimal (i.e., student email). Further, all information they hold will be encrypted and password protected and will only be accessible by vetted individuals. The information you enter into the apps will be kept strictly confidential.

The data you provide will be held securely on data processor servers during the study. At the end of the study, encrypted data files will be securely transferred for analysis. These external groups will store data only up until deletion is requested by our research team, after all relevant data has been safely transferred to us. Our collaborators acknowledge their requirement to: (i) comply with the applicable privacy legislation and (ii) maintain adequate safeguards and inform us if there was a breach of these safeguards.

To understand the association between mental health and academic performance, your i-spero self-reported data will be linked via your student number to university administrative (e.g. program and year of study, student status (international, domestic, full or part-time) and academic data (e.g. course grades, withdrawals, rates of failed courses, academic sanctions) for the current academic year. Your survey responses will also be linked to administrative health data from your electronic medical record at QSWs via your student number. This will allow us to evaluate the efficiency of the care you received for the current problem. Extracted data will be strictly limited to routinely collected service use data needed to estimate wait times, number of clinical visits per provider type, and number of referrals to community services. The research team will not extract personal health data, such as diagnosis.

Encrypted password protected data files will be stored on password-protected university computers. Data will be stored separately from student email addresses provided. Study data will be assigned a unique identifier so that individuals cannot be identified in any analysis. Reports of this study will use group data and will not discuss individual information. Only members of the research team at Queen's University will have access to the data following data transfer. However, the HSREB may require access to study records to monitor the ethical conduct of the research.

Data will be securely stored on university servers for a minimum of 5 years after study close and de-identified data will be stored in a secure university research data repository indefinitely. We may collaborate with other researchers at other institutions to analyze de-identified data. Researchers from inside and outside of Canada can apply to access this de-identified information for research purposes only.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. You can stop research participation or using i-spero at any point. Even if you choose to take part, you can withdraw from the study and have all your data removed without penalty and without giving a reason at any time until the point of publication. You just need to tell us by emailing flourish@queensu.ca. Furthermore, you can delete your i-spero account at any time. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not affect your access to other university supports or your academic standing.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

This study is expected to complete by September 2023. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please write to us by email to request information. We will share findings in manuscripts and through the Queen's Journal, social media and our website: <https://www.queensu.ca/u-flourish>.

Questions about the study?

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the investigators and their research team through the study email: flourish@queensu.ca. Alternatively you could contact the lead investigator Dr. Anne Duffy at 613-533-2508 directly. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant please contact - Queen's University HSREB at 1-844-535-2988 (toll free in North America) or HSREB@queensu.ca.



IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION

IN A LIFE OR DEATH EMERGENCY

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts and think that you might be unable to keep yourself safe, visit your nearest hospital emergency department or call 911.

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS

If you are in crisis and cannot wait to receive medical attention or are unsure what to do, call Addiction and Mental Health Services KFL&A at 613-544-4229 (local) or Crisis Services Canada at 1-833-456-4566 (Canada-wide).

IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF NON-URGENT CARE

If you are concerned about your mental health and are in need of non-urgent care, there are several options you might consider.

Your family doctor

Book an appointment with your family doctor. They can offer advice or refer you to other more specific services to get help.

Queens University Student Wellness Services.

If you do not have a family doctor, Student Wellness Services can offer a range of services, including counselling and medical assessment and treatment. The Counselling Service can help you address personal or emotional problems that are getting in the way of having a positive experience at Queen's University and realising your full academic and personal potential. Services are free and confidential. It is important to know that the Counselling Service is not just for those with a diagnosis: you can contact them for any reason. To make an appointment, call 613-533-2506.

For further information about the services provided by Queen's Student Wellness Services please visit:

<http://queensu.ca/studentwellness/health-services>