

Kids, Bugs and Drugs: Human-microbial relations within and beyond the lab

1. What is this study about?

This project involves interviews and focus groups with family and community stakeholders to better understand how illness, infection and immunity are understood and managed, day-to-day by families, young people, and communities.

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary.

2. Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by researchers from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) at The University of Sydney as part of an Australian Research Council funded Discovery Early Career Research Award (DE22101498). The researchers team includes:

Name	Affiliation	Role
Dr Katherine Kenny	Sydney Centre for Healthy Societies (SCHS), FASS	Chief Investigator katherine.kenny@sydney.edu.au
Dr Gianni Tien	SCHS/FASS	Co-investigator gianni.tien@sydney.edu.au
Dr Roberta Pala	SCHS/FASS	Co-investigator roberta.pala@sydney.edu.au
Dr Leah Williams Veazey	SCHS/FASS	Co-investigator
Ms Imogen Harper	SCHS/FASS	Research Assistant
Dr Jenni Hagedorn	SCHS/FASS	Research Support Officer

3. Who can take part in the study?

In this part of the study, we are seeking University students studying microbiology at second year level or above (with a lab component). This includes undergraduate students, honours students, masters students, and PhD students. You must be at least 18 to participate in the study.

If you know someone who might be suitable for this study you are welcome to pass this information on.

4. What will the study involve for me?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual interview and/or a focus group discussion led by an experienced member of the research team.

Individual interviews will last 45-60 minutes and can be carried out at a time and place that is convenient for you, or remotely via zoom. All the information you provide in the interview will be treated confidentially. We will audio-record your interview, and then transcribe it (type it up). Your name and

any identifying characteristics will be removed from transcribed data and will be replaced with a participant ID number.

Focus groups of 45-60 minutes will be scheduled at various times to maximise potential participation. Virtual opportunities will be made available, if necessary. Focus group sessions will be digitally video-recorded to enable accurate attributions of transcribed audio data. Your name and identifying characteristics will be removed from the transcripts and replaced with a participant ID number.

Written consent will be gained prior to participation. All data generated by the project will be protected: recordings and transcripts will be kept on a password-protected secure server at The University of Sydney and will only be made available to project investigators. You will not be able to be identified in any publications or presentations that result from the study.

Interviews and focus groups will cover your education and lab experience, your motivations and interests in microbiology, and how you relate to and manage the microbes in your life (e.g. how you manage illness, infection and immunity day-to-day; build immunity and fight infection or recover after an illness etc).

5. Can I withdraw once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part.

Your decision will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at The University of Sydney or beyond. If you decide to participate, you do not have to answer particular questions or participate in any part of the conversation if you do not want to. You can withdraw your contributions to the focus group discussion at any point up until the results of the study are published.

6. Are there any risks or costs?

Participation in the study itself presents no additional risk to participants beyond those of their everyday lives.

Aside from the time-commitment of participation, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

7. Are there any benefits?

Although there is no intended direct benefit for participants, we believe that the results could help enhance education and health and care service provision in the future.

Participants will each receive an AUD\$30 gift card as thanks for participating in the study.

8. What will happen to information that is collected?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting the information you share in the focus group discussion for the purposes of this study. We are planning for the study findings to be published and thus made public, but you will not be individually identifiable in these outputs.

Focus groups will be audio and video recorded. All audio will be transcribed and then kept on a password protected, secure server, in a de-identified form. Video recordings will be used for the sole purpose of ensuring attribution of focus group contributions to the correct speaker. Once transcribed, video recording will be permanently deleted.

Transcripts will be used so that the researchers have access to a detailed record of the conversations, and closely analysed for emerging themes and ideas. Transcripts will only be accessible to the core members of the research team and will not be released except with your permission, unless this is required by law.

9. Will I be told the results of the study?

Findings from the study will be published in scholarly and general-readership journals. They will also be made accessible insofar as copyright permits through the project website: kidsbugsanddrugs.org.

10. What if I would like further information?

When you have read this information, the following researchers will be available to discuss it with you and answer any questions you may have:

- Dr Katherine Kenny: katherine.kenny@sydney.edu.au
- Dr Jianni Tien: jianni.tien@sydney.edu.au
- Dr Roberta Pala: roberta.pala@sydney.edu.au

11. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney [2023/390](#) according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the University:

Human Ethics Manager
human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
+61 2 8627 8176

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Participant Consent Form



Kids, Bugs and Drugs: Managing illness, infection, and immunity in everyday life

I agree to take part in this research study. In giving my consent, I confirm that:

- I understand the purpose of the study, the details of my involvement have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written Participant Information Statement to keep.
- I acknowledge that the risks and benefits of participating in this study have been explained to me to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my interview and/or focus-group discussion contributions will be digitally recorded.
- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary.
- I am assured that my decision to participate will not have any impact on my relationship with the research team or The University of Sydney.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study and can choose to withdraw information I have already provided at any time (unless the data has already been published).
- I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be protected and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.

I confirm the following:

I consent to being contacted for future studies

Yes No

If you answered **yes**, please provide your preferred contact details (email/telephone/postal address):

I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher, and that I may request a copy at any time.

Participant Name

Signature

Date
