



INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Full Project Title: The Clinical Phenotype of Schizotypal Disorder in Childhood: An Investigation Examining Cognitive, Motor and Neurological Functioning

What is the research about?

The aim of this current project is to better understand a small group of children with an unusual preoccupation with fantasies that may have problems including social understanding and difficulty developing strong peer relationships. It is important to study these children because they are often not recognised and understood to be experiencing difficulties, despite the fact that these characteristics can affect their learning and development as they progress through primary and secondary school.

We aim to recruit 150 children for this project; 50 children who present with the characteristics described above, 50 children with diagnosed or suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder, and 50 children that do not present with these characteristics or diagnosis.

What is required?

Participation in this study will involve between 3.5 and 5 hours of time. Should you allow your child to participate in the study, you and your child will be asked to complete the following:

1) Initial interview, questionnaires and a hair sample: Your child will be asked to attend a session at a location of your choice or online via a teleconference platform with a researcher. You and your child will participate in a clinical interview exploring different aspects of social, behavioural and language development. Your child will be asked to participate in activities and tasks that assess their thinking skills. They will also be asked to provide a small hair sample. This should take approximately 3.5-4 hours.

2) Brain MRI scan and saliva samples (optional): Your child will also have the option to participate in a brain imaging session (Magnetic Resonance Imaging or MRI) at the Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville. During the brain imaging scan your child will be required to lie still in the scanner for approximately 60 minutes, where pictures of how their brain functions will be taken. Between the visits, your child will be asked to provide saliva samples periodically.

What happens next?

If you or your child are interested in participating, or would like more information, please contact the researchers on the details below. An information sheet will be sent out to you containing more detailed information about yours and your child's involvement. You can choose to participate in the project following receiving this information, and the researcher will follow up with you to discuss options. You or your child can choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

This research has been initiated by Dr. Renee Testa, Professor Christos Pantelis and Professor Bruce Tonge, and has been funded by a research project grant from the University of Melbourne. This research is being conducted by the Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Centre (The University of Melbourne), in conjunction with the Royal Children's Hospital and Monash University. The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee.

Contact Details: Dr Riana Marie 0493 634 598