Summer 2016

KU CARE LAB

"Eat Study” Recruitment Progress

We are happy to announce that the “Eat Study” has passed the 200 participant mark! We aim to recruit 250 total individuals and then follow participants over a period of three years via online follow-up surveys, questionnaires, and phone/in-person interviews.

The goals of our research are to understand what predicts improvement and relapses in over time, and to improve the way disordered eating is diagnosed and assessed.

Our participants’ contribution to our research is critical in enabling our research team to learn more information that we hope can be used to improve treatment for those with disordered eating.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and the opportunity to see what we have been finding in our research studies in the CARE Lab!

Please note that each August our lab closes for a brief period to allow our team to get some rest and relaxation. We will be closed this year from Aug. 1-Aug. 21. We’ll see you in the fall!

Special points of interest:

- “Eat Study” recruitment progress & feedback survey
- Exciting new studies
- Updates on the lab studies & results

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New Brain Imaging Study!

Dr. Forbush recently received a small pilot-study grant to test how people with disordered-eating behaviors respond to reward and stress. We are interested in whether problems in the brain’s response to reward interact with a stress hormone called “cortisol.”

The goals of our research are to understand what predicts improvement and relapses in over time, and to improve the way disordered eating is diagnosed and assessed.

The study will take place at the Hoglund Brain Imaging Center in Kansas City, Kansas. We hope to begin contacting potentially eligible persons in Fall 2016 to provide more details and the opportunity to enroll. Compensation will be $100 for a one-time, three-hour visit and participants will get to take home a picture of their brain!

We hope that the results from this study can inform the development of new psychological and medication-based treatments for people who struggle with binge eating and other disordered eating behaviors, such as purging, fasting, or excessive exercise.
News from the CARE Lab Team

It has been an exciting year for the CARE Lab team!

Dr. Forbush was awarded the prestigious 2015 Rising Star Award from the American Psychological Society.

One of our graduate students, Brittany Bohrer, received her Master of Arts degree in Psychology. Ms. Bohrer also received the 2016 University of Kansas Graduate Research Competition Award for Psychology.

Danielle Chapa, another CARE Lab graduate student, was recognized with an Honorable Mention for the Ford Foundation Fellowship administered by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Ms. Chapa also received the KU Clinical Psychology Program's Citizenship award for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Kelsey Hagan, another graduate student on the CARE Lab team, was awarded the 2015-2016 University of Kansas Carlin Graduate Teaching Assistant Award, the 2015-2016 University of Kansas C.R. Snyder Research Achievement Award, and the 2015-2016 University of Kansas Don Hutchings Memorial Award. Ms. Hagan also successfully completed her task project, and received honors for her work.

We are also excited to welcome a new member of our team! Victoria Perko will be joining our lab in the 2016-2017 academic year as a student in the Clinical Psychology doctoral program. Ms. Perko is a graduate of Trinity University and has been working at the Oregon Research Institute conducting research on disordered eating.

We have published a number of papers about our exciting research findings in the past several months. People who are interested in reading these papers are welcome to contact our lab for a copy.

Updates on the “Severity” Study

Tyler Hunt, CARE Lab graduate student, decided to tackle an important issue for her Master’s thesis: how to define “severity” in the case of eating disorders. Providing more information on what constitutes a “mild,” “moderate,” or “severe” eating disorder can be used to refer clients to the best level of care, and may prevent people from being under- or over-treated.

We observed the association between disordered eating behaviors (e.g., body dissatisfaction, binge eating, restricting) and impairment over a nine to twelve-month period.

Preliminary results of the study showed that the frequency of binge eating behaviors (e.g., eating until uncomfortably full, eating when not hungry, eating as if on auto-pilot) was the strongest predictor of impairment. The more frequently a person engages in binge eating behaviors, the more problems a person tends to have with his or her day-to-day functioning. These results support the current medical definitions of severity for binge eating disorder.
Two exciting new studies are currently in the planning stages. One of our graduate students, Brittany Bohrer, plans to conduct a pilot study to examine the effects of a brief online treatment for disordered eating behaviors in persons with type 1 diabetes. Disordered eating behaviors can result in serious complications for individuals with type 1 diabetes, and we are interested in examining whether this type of treatment can help reduce unhealthy behaviors and improve diabetes management and outcomes.

Another one of our graduate students, Kelsey Hagan, plans to conduct a study to measure reward preference and response in women who have active issues with binge eating and compensating, and with women who have recovered from these issues. We believe this will help to inform what factors lead to and maintain disordered eating over time, and will inform new treatments for disordered eating.

We hope to begin recruiting participants for these studies in the next year or so, and "Eat Study" participants may be eligible for participation. We'll have more information on these studies in future newsletters and emails.

Our lab has begun work on an exciting new project! We are partnering with Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City to develop a questionnaire to assess feeding and eating disorder symptoms in children and teens. Our goal is to develop a reliable and valid measure to help health care professionals assess and treat feeding and eating disorders in children and adolescents of all backgrounds.

While some disordered-eating measures for children already exist, we aim to create a new, improved questionnaire that is strongly supported by research and applicable to patients of all kinds. For example, many of the existing questionnaires have been developed with young adult, female samples with restrictive disordered eating symptoms (such as anorexia nervosa), while our new sample will include a diverse sample with male patients and patients who have a variety of disorders, including bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder.

We recently conducted a study to look at two therapies, cognitive remediation therapy (CRT) and cognitive remediation emotional skills training (CREST). These therapies were developed to target neuropsychological and socio-emotional deficits that research has shown to be present in many individuals with anorexia nervosa (AN). For example, people with AN sometimes have difficulty integrating small details into a bigger picture, thinking and behaving in alternative ways, managing their own emotions, and understanding the emotions of others.

CRT and CREST are unique in that they do not target disordered-eating behaviors and thoughts but instead use exercises that encourage patients to engage in alternative ways of behaving and thinking in their everyday life, with the hope that this will translate into less rigidity in eating behavior, as well.

We used a technique called meta-analysis to synthesize the outcomes of CRT and CREST in studies that have been published in the research literature. We found that CRT and CREST facilitated small-to-large improvements in ability to engage in different ways of thinking and integrate small details into a bigger picture; moderate-to-large improvements in eating-disorder-related symptoms; and small-to-moderate improvements in anxious and depressive symptoms. There was preliminary evidence for CREST helping persons with AN be better able to understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, and better manage their own emotions.

Because many people with AN enjoy CRT and CREST and these therapies improve a range of symptoms, our findings suggest that CRT and CREST should be more widely disseminated as therapies for AN.
How Are We Doing? Participant Feedback Survey

We are interested in hearing from “Eat Study” participants about their personal experiences with the KU CARE Lab.

We want to know how participants feel about parking, building access, the interview space, our interviewers, email and phone communication with our lab, the length of the study, payment procedures, and more!

The feedback provided in this survey will be used to improve the experience for current and future study participants.

This survey is optional and is not part of the “Eat Study”, or any other research study. Thus, no compensation will be provided. This information will simply be used to get participants’ opinions about their experiences with our lab.

The survey is designed to be completely anonymous, however participants will be given the option to include their contact information if they want to further elaborate on their experiences and speak directly with a lab member about their feedback.

To complete the survey, participants can follow this link:
https://kansasedu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8tYYXvSurjdrp77