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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Version 1.1 dated 11/7/2026

Title of Project: **Workplace Wellbeing in UK Optometry: A Study of Job Satisfaction and Resilience**

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Name and Contact Details of Supervisor: Gail Hebson g.l.hebson@keele.ac.uk

1. Invitation

We would be grateful if you would consider taking part in this research study. Taking part is entirely voluntary. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If anything is unclear or you would like further information, please contact Ben Ayliffe, who will be happy to answer any questions.

Reading this information sheet should take no more than 10 minutes.

Ben Ayliffe is the primary researcher for this study. He is a hospital optometrist at SpaMedica and is currently undertaking an MSc in Management with a specialization in Healthcare Management at Keele University.

2. Research Summary

This project explores the professional well-being of UK optometrists. International research indicates that nearly half of optometrists in the US and Australia face burnout, but there is limited data on this issue in the UK. This creates a gap in our knowledge about how common burnout is and what workplace factors contribute to it. This study aims to address that gap by determining the true prevalence of burnout and identifying the workplace factors that influence it. The findings will support efforts to promote healthier, more sustainable working conditions. Whether you are in pre-registration or fully qualified, your input is valuable. Please take just 10 minutes to complete this anonymous questionnaire and help shape the future of our profession.



Facts about participation

3. What is the purpose of the research?

This study aims to better understand burnout and job satisfaction among UK optometrists, and to explore whether these experiences differ across workplace settings and working conditions. It will be the first study to apply the Job Demands-Resources model to the optometric profession. The findings may help identify factors that affect wellbeing at work and inform future support for optometrists, with the potential to improve resilience, job satisfaction, productivity, and retention

4. Why have I been invited?

You are invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as a UK-based pre-registration or qualified optometrist. This may be through professional networks, mailing lists, your employer, or social media.

5. Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. There is no payment or compensation for participation, and choosing not to participate will not result in any adverse consequences.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to provide informed consent before proceeding to the questionnaire. Your participation and responses will remain anonymous.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

Before taking part, you should read this 'Participant Information Sheet v1.1 11.7.26' carefully and contact the researcher if anything is unclear or if you have any questions. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a one-off online questionnaire at a time that is convenient for you before 31 August 2026. The consent process is integrated into the questionnaire to make participation more convenient while protecting confidentiality and anonymity.

The questionnaire asks about workplace experiences, demands, workplace support, motivation, job satisfaction, and burnout. It includes a combination of established research questionnaires and questions developed specifically for this study. At points, there will be opportunities to provide short comments, which may be paraphrased or quoted. Participants will be able to skip questions (except those related to consent) and return to previous questions to amend their answers during the survey.



Figure 1 Participant Roadmap

7. Expenses and payments

There will be no direct/indirect incentives or payments to participate

8. What data will be collected and/or measurements taken?

Survey responses will be collected anonymously via SurveyMonkey and analysed in SPSS 30. To improve participant confidentiality, only limited demographic information will be collected, including your age, working setting, gender, qualifications, and years of qualification. Questions will also ask about your career intentions and the reasons behind them to establish the operational importance of burnout/career satisfaction and inform interventions.

All questions are optional and can be skipped if appropriate, except for those in the mandatory consent process.

9. What are the possible disadvantages, burdens, and risks (if any) of taking part?

Whilst some participants may find it mildly upsetting to reflect on work-related stress and previous experience, the main disadvantage of participation is that it requires time to read the information, ask questions, and complete the questionnaire. There is also a re-identification risk, especially if the response rate is low. To address this, the questions have been optimized to minimize the amount of demographic information obtained and extend the age ranges. Additionally, participants are advised to avoid including any identifiable details in the comment sections. The questionnaire has been intentionally delivered on an encrypted, GDPR compliant platform with additional layers of security enabled, such as 'Anonymous Responses', which strips the IP address of respondents, whilst Email Invitation Tracking has also been disabled to bolster anonymity.



All information will be kept secure, and only an overview of the findings will be shared. Raw data will not be shared.

10. What are the possible advantages or benefits (if any) of taking part?

Although participation doesn't offer any personal or financial rewards, sharing your experiences can help build a clearer picture of burnout and job satisfaction among optometrists. This insight is significant if we aim to implement meaningful improvements. Your input will give us a better understanding of the current optometric work environment in the UK, which could support efforts to improve backing for clinicians, create healthier working conditions, and help maximize optometric satisfaction and retention within the profession.

Confidentiality and Withdrawal

11. Will my data be kept confidential?

The raw data that identifies you will be kept exclusively by the researcher and not shared under any circumstances. Data will be kept securely in a password-protected research folder on the university system, in line with the university's policies. This project will align with Keele University's data protection policy and UK GDPR.

Data will be anonymous from the point of capture, in accordance with SurveyMonkey's Anonymous Responses protocol, and Email Invitation Tracking has also been disabled to further bolster anonymity. The questionnaire is also structured to minimize the risk of reidentification – for instance, if there is only one female optometrist under 25 who owns her own practice whilst having IP status and a professional certificate in glaucoma, you would theoretically be able to re-identify the respondent. There is also a risk that someone may criticize or reference a particular issue or event in some comment boxes, which could indirectly identifying themselves as the respondent. Given re-identification is undesirable, the questionnaire has been constructed to minimize the collection of demographic information to mitigate risk and safeguard participants. It is also why the raw data will not be shared or analysed at too granular a level, to avoid making statements such as 'female clinicians over 65 planning to retire with this qualification are more likely to report burnout'.

Please note that disclosing an unprosecuted criminal offense or professional misconduct may require further investigation if it is in the public interest. Options for such disclosures have been limited by the questionnaire's structure to protect participants.

The data, when anonymous, may be presented at academic conferences or published as a project report, an academic dissertation, or in academic journals or books. It could also be made available to any commissioner or funder of the research.

The raw data will be retained for a minimum of 6 years in accordance with the University Records Management Policy. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely and electronically destroyed. The policy for retention of research data can be accessed from <https://www.keele.ac.uk/recordsmanagement/recordsretentionschedule/>



12. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer, you can stop participating in the questionnaire at any time. During the questionnaire, you can avoid questions you do not want to answer and go back and amend any previous question during the questionnaire.

Given that respondents may skip questions they prefer not to answer, it is important to note that survey responses are periodically saved, and partial responses will be included in the analysis.

Once the questionnaire has been submitted, you can also withdraw at any point without giving a reason. There are two ways to do this. Firstly, you could use the same device to deselect all answers – ensuring you press next to save the unselected version on all pages before removing consent last. Secondly, you could contact the researcher or their supervisor. Requests to withdraw received after 31.8.26 cannot be actioned as analysis will have begun

Please note that the strong emphasis on anonymity means we cannot guarantee this will always be possible. Firstly, we will have no IP information and thus attempting to manually alter answers or remove consent will require you to use the same device you submitted on, given that this is only possible via cookies on your device that are not made aware to the researcher. If you delete your cookies or do not accept them, you may not be able to do this. Additionally, if you contact the researcher to remove your responses, given anonymity at the point of entry, we may only be able to identify your answers to facilitate removal if you can provide further information on your response, such as the exact wording of your answers and the time of completion.

Further Information and Contacts

13. What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern, or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance, you should contact the researcher if appropriate. If the researcher is a student, there will also be an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint and a supervisor is listed, please contact the Supervisor with the details of the complaint. The contact details for both the researcher and any supervisor are detailed on page 1.

If your concern or complaint is not resolved by the researcher or their supervisor, you should contact the approving Research Ethics Committee Chair:

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REC Name: Faculty of Humanities and Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Chair: Shiva Sikdar

Email address: humss.ethics@keele.ac.uk



14. Who is funding the research?

This research is self-funded as part of the researcher's MSc dissertation at Keele University. No external funding has been received. The researcher will receive no financial benefit beyond the academic credit associated with completing the dissertation. None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward for conducting this study, other than their normal salary as an employee/student of the University.

15. Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by Dr Gail Hebson in line with Keele University's research ethics procedures. The ethics proforma has been signed off by the dissertation supervisor, Dr. Gail Hebson, confirming compliance with Keele University's ethical protocols.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate, your consent will be sought as part of the SurveyMonkey questionnaire, which can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BurnoutUKOptoms>