

NTL MEDIA ALERT

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020**  
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

# US researchers seeking 6,000+ participants for world's largest eating disorders genetics study

*Study to pinpoint genes influencing risk of developing eating disorders*

Today, October 13, University of North Carolina (UNC) researchers are calling for more than 6,000 participants aged 18 years and over, with first-hand experience of an eating disorder to enroll in the world's largest ever genetic research study into three complex and devastating mental illnesses.

The ground-breaking Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person's risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder, to improve treatment, and ultimately save lives.



The UNC researchers call for study participants coincides with the release of their survey results examining the impact of COVID-19 on Americans living with eating disorders, in which two-in-three respondents voiced concern for their mental well-being.<sup>1</sup>

Eating disorders are complex mental illnesses that for some, can lead to severe and permanent physical complications, and even death.<sup>2,3</sup> While various studies have explored one's genetic predisposition to developing an eating disorder, only a handful of the responsible genes have been identified to date, leaving many more to be found.

To hear how cracking the genetic code of eating disorders will improve treatments, and save lives, tee up an interview and/or photo opportunity with:

<b>HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS</b>	
<i>* Denotes Spanish-speaking spokesperson</i>	
<b>Professor Cynthia Bulik</b>	Distinguished Professor of Eating Disorders & Founding Director, The University of North Carolina Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders & Principal Investigator, EDGI, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Professor Laura Thornton</b>	Deputy Director, EDGI, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Rachael Flatt</b>	Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, EDGI research assistant & US Ladies' National Champion & Olympic figure skater, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Jessica Baker</b>	Clinical Psychologist, Associate Professor, & Associate Research Director, UNC Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Tonya Foreman</b>	Child Psychiatrist, Associate Professor, Medical Director, University of North Carolina Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Christine Peat</b>	Clinical Psychologist, Direction of the National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Rachel Goode</b>	Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Mae Lynn Reyes-Rodríguez*</b>	Associate Clinical Professor, Psychiatry Department & adjunct faculty, Center for Latino Health (CELAH), The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> <i>*Available for Spanish interviews</i>
<b>Dr Paola Giusti Rodríguez*</b>	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> <i>*Available for Spanish interviews</i>
<b>Dr Ya-Ke "Grace" Wu</b>	Assistant Professor of Nursing, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> <i>*Available for Mandarin interviews</i>

<b>Dr Stephanie Zerwas</b>	Clinical Psychologist, Owner & Founder, Flourish Chapel Hill, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Dr Laura Huckins</b>	Assistant Professor, Division of Psychiatric Genomics, Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai, <b>NEW YORK</b>
<b>Dr Stephanie Setliff</b>	Psychiatrist & Regional Medical Director, Eating Recovery Center, <b>TEXAS</b>
<b>Professor Kelly L. Klump</b>	MSU Foundation Professor of Psychology, Michigan State University & Fellow, Academy for Eating Disorders, <b>MICHIGAN</b>
<b>Professor Lisa Lilienfeld</b>	Clinical Psychologist, <b>WASHINGTON D.C.</b>
<b>Dr Karen Mitchell</b>	Clinical Research Psychologist, National Center for PTSD, VA Boston Healthcare System & Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine, <b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>
<b>Dr Lauren Breithaupt</b>	Clinical & Research Fellow in Psychology, Massachusetts General Hospital & Harvard Medical School, <b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>
<b>Dr Emily Pisetsky</b>	Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, University of Minnesota Medical School, <b>MINNESOTA</b>
<b>EATING DISORDER ADVOCACY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
<b>Patti Geolat</b>	Founder, <i>Something for Kelly Foundation</i> & founder & CEO, Geolat Companies, <b>TEXAS</b>
<b>Laura Collins Lyster-Mensh</b>	Author, Founder & Executive Director, F.E.A.S.T., <b>VIRGINIA</b>
<b>INFLUENCER</b>	
<b>Maris Degener</b>	Yoga teacher, writer & mental health advocate who battled an eating disorder during her teens, <b>CALIFORNIA</b>
<b>AMERICANS WITH FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF AN EATING DISORDER</b>	
<b>Marybeth, 49</b>	Eating disorders advocate who has lived with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa & binge-eating disorder, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Katie, 20</b>	Passionate writer & college student who has spent more than half of their* life consumed by bulimia nervosa, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> * <i>Katie has chosen to identify with gender neutral pronouns</i>
<b>Stacey, 48</b>	Eating disorders advocate who has lived with anorexia nervosa, <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>
<b>Manda, 33</b>	Endured 20 years between her first symptoms & receiving treatment for an eating disorder, <b>TEXAS</b>
<b>Janice, 65</b>	Executive Director, Eating Disorders Resource Center (EDRC) who has battled anorexia nervosa for almost 50 years, <b>CALIFORNIA</b>
<b>Erika, 30*</b>	PhD student in Linguistics who was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa at 12 years of age, <b>CALIFORNIA</b> * <i>Available for Spanish interviews</i>
<b>Maddie, 21</b>	Student who lived with anorexia nervosa throughout most of her teens, <b>CALIFORNIA</b>
<b>Jacob, 25</b>	Student, avid hiker, & writer who battled anorexia nervosa for nine years, <b>NEBRASKA</b>
<b>Shira, 37</b>	Nurse, eating disorder mentor, & avid hiker who has lived with three eating disorders for 23 years, <b>MINNESOTA</b>
<b>Heather, 43</b>	Former ballerina, social worker & research associate who battled anorexia nervosa for 23 years, <b>RHODE ISLAND</b>
<b>Amy, 50</b>	Mom who has waged a more than 30-year-long battle with anorexia nervosa, <b>NEW JERSEY</b>
<b>Kelly, 29</b>	Nursing student who has lived with anorexia nervosa, <b>FLORIDA</b>
<b>DIGITAL MEDIA KIT + VISION</b>	<b>Digital media kit available TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13 – <a href="http://edgimediakit.org">edgimediakit.org</a></b> <b>B-roll (broadcast) vision available for download – <a href="https://vimeo.com/464100773/35c0fa5552">https://vimeo.com/464100773/35c0fa5552</a></b>
<b>INTERVIEWS</b>	<p><b>Phil Bridges</b> University of North Carolina (UNC), US <a href="mailto:phil.bridges@unchealth.unc.edu">phil.bridges@unchealth.unc.edu</a> (919) 457-6347</p> <p><b>Casey Adams Jones</b> C. Adams Agency, US <a href="mailto:info@cadamsagency.com">info@cadamsagency.com</a> (336) 906-5246</p> <p><b>Kirsten Bruce &amp; Mel Kheradi</b> VIVA! Communications, AUS <a href="mailto:kirstenbruce@vivacomunications.com.au">kirstenbruce@vivacomunications.com.au</a> / <a href="mailto:mel@vivacomunications.com.au">mel@vivacomunications.com.au</a> +61 401 717 566   +61 421 551 257 +61 2 9968 3741   +61 2 9968 1604</p>

## References

1. Termorshuizen, J.D., et al., *Early Impact of COVID-19 on Individuals with Eating Disorders: A survey of ~1000 Individuals in the United States and the Netherlands*. Int J Eat Disord, 2020.
2. National Institute of Mental Health. *Eating Disorders: About More Than Food*. 2018 [cited Aug, 2020]; Available from: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/eating-disorders/index.shtml>.
3. Fichter, M.M., et al., *Long-term outcome of anorexia nervosa: Results from a large clinical longitudinal study*. Int J Eat Disord, 2017. 50(9): p. 1018-1030.