A mixed-methods exploration into the experience of members of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN): Introductory Information

Dear INFOSAN Member,

My name is Carmen Savelli and I am conducting this study as a student in the PhD Public Health programme at Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom. You may also know me as one of the Technical Officers working as the INFOSAN Secretariat at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland.

What is the study about?
The purpose of this study is to interrogate INFOSAN in order to describe and explore the experiences of members and better understand the role of the network in mitigating the burden of foodborne illness around the world. The study will examine access to and usage of the INFOSAN Community Website, explore barriers and facilitators to active participation in INFOSAN, determine perceptions about the utility of INFOSAN to mitigate foodborne illness, and scrutinize if and how participation in this network creates value for members.

Why have I been approached?
You have been approached because the study requires information from registered INFOSAN members.

Do I have to take part?
No. It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. The study is designed in three phases: Phase 1 will examine access and usage patterns of the INFOSAN Community Website; Phase 2 will involve the completion of an online survey; and Phase 3 will involve individual interviews conducted online using WebEx. Taking part in one phase of the study does not require your participation in the other phases.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?
Participation in Phase 1 of the study requires no further action on your part. Data on access and usage of the INFOSAN Community Website has already been collected as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities of the INFOSAN Secretariat in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Use of the INFOSAN Community Website. Any members not wishing to have their website access and usage data utilized for the purpose of this particular study should make this known by email to the researcher within the next two weeks (c.savelli@lancaster.ac.uk). Those who are recruited in Phase 1 will have a further two weeks to opt out of the study, after which time this will no longer be possible due to aggregation of data.

Participation in Phase 2 of the study requires the completion of an online survey of approximately 30-45 minutes which will explore questions about your experience as an INFOSAN member. Once the survey has been submitted, it will not be possible to opt out because survey responses are anonymous.

Participation in Phase 3 of the study will involve a one-on-one individual interview conducted online using WebEx with the researcher. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will explore in more detail your experiences as an INFOSAN Member. Those who are recruited for Phase 3 of the study will have two weeks to opt out after which time this will no longer be possible.

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Will my data be identifiable?
No. The information you provide will be reported anonymously. Any direct quotes from participants in Phase 3 will be reported anonymously. Quantitative data will be reported by region so that no country-specific details will be reported. The data collected for this study will be stored securely and only the researchers conducting this study will have access to this data:

- Audio recordings will be deleted once the thesis has been examined and accepted
- The files on the computer will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them) and the computer itself password protected for the duration of the study
- At the end of the study, all related electronic information will be archived for 10 years in secure encrypted storage on the Lancaster University server. At the end of this period, they will be destroyed.
- The typed version of your interview will be made anonymous by removing any identifying information including your name. Anonymised direct quotations from your interview may be used in the reports or publications from the study, and neither your name nor your country will be attached to them.
- All your personal data will be confidential and will be kept separately from your interview responses (if you participate in Phase 3). However, there are some limits to confidentiality in Phase 3: if what is said in the interview makes me think that you, or someone else, is at significant risk of harm, I will have to break confidentiality and speak to a member of staff about this. If possible, I will tell you if I have to do this. In addition, whilst every effort will be made, it is not possible for the researcher to ensure confidentiality of your participation in Phase 3 if you choose to connect to the researcher by WebEx on your work premises during the working day. If you volunteer to participate in Phase 3, you are encouraged to connect by WebEx in a private room to conduct your interview, where no one else can see your computer screen or hear your conversation.

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

What will happen to the results?
The results will be summarised and reported in a PhD thesis and may be submitted for publication in relevant academic or professional conferences and journals or other media including books or websites, pending necessary clearance from WHO. Only those data collected with the expressed consent of participants is utilized and reported on for the purposes of this study. INFOSAN Members will also be invited to participate in webinars after each phase to learn about the results and next steps.

Are there any risks?
There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study. However, if you experience any distress following participation you are encouraged to inform the researcher and contact the resources provided at the end of this sheet. Neither participating nor abstaining will impact your future treatment as an INFOSAN member or the technical support provided to you or your country by the WHO.

Are there any benefits to taking part?
Although you may find participating interesting, there are no direct benefits in taking part. However, some participants may find it a positive experience to reflect on their role as an INFOSAN member as well as their contributions to a safer food supply, and to participate in research which they may feel is of relevance to them, their institution, their country or the global community.

Who has reviewed the project?
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Review Committee at the World Health Organization and the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University.

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?
If you have any questions about the study, please contact the researcher:

Carmen Savelli
c.savelli@lancaster.ac.uk
+41 22 791 3234

Or his primary supervisor in the Department of Health Research at Lancaster University:

Dr Céu Mateus
c.mateus@lancaster.ac.uk
+44 1524 593182

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Or attend the upcoming webinar:

![Webinar Image]

**Complaints**
If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to the researcher or his supervisor, you can contact:

Professor Catherine Walshe  
Head of the Division of Health Research  
+44 (0)1524 510124  
c.walshe@lancaster.ac.uk  
Lancaster University  
Lancaster  
LA1 4YW

If you wish to speak to someone outside of the Public Health Doctorate Programme, you may also contact:

Professor Roger Pickup  
Tel: +44 (0)1524 593746  
Associate Dean for Research  
Email: r.pickup@lancaster.ac.uk  
Faculty of Health and Medicine  
(Division of Biomedical and Life Sciences)  
Lancaster University  
Lancaster  
LA1 4YG

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

**Resources in the event of distress**
Should you feel distressed either as a result of taking part, or in the future, the following resource may be of assistance:  
https://online.supportgroups.com/

Kind regards,

Carmen Savelli