

Exploring Materials and Sensory Preference with Amputees

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: Project ID No. 5698/003



We are looking for people to take part in a pilot study led by Caitlin McMullan (CCA) and Sarah Wilkes (UCL Institute of Making).

In this study we will explore how the choice of materials offered for prosthetic limbs affects your experience of them. We will also explore whether particular materials or textures stimulate phantom limb sensations.

The overall aim of the study is to better understand the sensory and material preferences of wearers of prosthetic limbs. This will be fed back to clinicians, prosthetists and manufacturers, with the potential to inform the design of prosthetic limbs and desensitisation therapies. The findings from this study will also feed into a larger Wellcome Trust funded project (Material Anxieties) which aims to encourage more user-centred materials selection in the healthcare design industry.

If you choose to take part in this study, you will be invited to a group session at the Institute of Making in London that will last approximately 2 hours. You will be asked some questions about your experiences of the materials currently used in prosthetics. You will then be asked to handle a selection of 15-20 materials that you may recognise from everyday life, and will then be asked to give written responses to a series of questions about them. You will be asked whether any of the materials induce phantom limb sensations, if applicable. You may also be invited to take part in an optional follow-on interview with Caitlin McMullan.

If you choose to take part in this study we will cover travel costs and pay £7.50/hour for your time.

You do not need to have experienced phantom limb sensations to take part in the study, but you must be aged between 18 and 65. This study involves handling samples of materials with different textures: if you experience more than minimal phantom limb pain or discomfort from handling materials such as plastics and fabrics then you should not take part. Please let us know in advance if you have any known allergies to common metals and materials.

If you are interested in taking part or would like to know more, please get in touch: Sarah Wilkes, UCL Institute of Making: s.wilkes@ucl.ac.uk