

## EASHW TIPS – THE STUDY POPULATION

C1. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE INTENDED STUDY POPULATION(S).  
MENTION: (1) ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, (2) INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA,  
(3) METHOD OF RECRUITMENT.

EASHW reviewers need to understand your study population to assess ethical risks like participant recognizability, exclusion, or unfair recruitment. Reflect on the following points:

### 1. Study population size and recognizability

- Small or niche populations are more likely to be recognizable (e.g., a study in a small village or among a specific group).
- Even in large populations, individuals can be identifiable (e.g., a 12-year-old in a group of 1000 students).
- Always consider how population size affects participant anonymity.

### 2. Inclusion/exclusion criteria

- Specify who can and cannot participate and explain why.
- Reflect on ethical implications. Some examples
  - You target students aged 15-18 in classroom study: what about students who are younger or older and part of that class?
  - Using only online surveys: May this exclude people without internet access? Can you say “all people can participate”?
  - Studying binary sex differences: May some people feel excluded?
- Reflect upon your criteria. Ensure your criteria are clear, fair, and ethically sound. If in doubt, at the very least, read our EASHW tips about vulnerability in research.

### 3. Recruitment

- Recruitment methods can impact recognizability and inclusivity.
- Some examples:
  - Sending surveys to specific emails may affect anonymity (consider GDPR rules). If you do this, your study is not fully anonymous.
  - Recruiting “anyone over 18” only via social media excludes people who do not use social media, so you cannot claim then that “anyone over the age of 18 can participate.”
- Use recruitment methods that are inclusive and respectful of privacy.