Supplementary Material

***Participant Information Sheet***

**Study title:** Investigating current issues in forensic entomology: from crime scene to court

**What is the purpose of the study?**

You are invited to take part in a research study investigating the strengths and weaknesses in the progress of using entomological evidence in forensic investigation from collection through to providing expert opinion in court. This data will be used to see how these strengths and weaknesses match up with current research focus and provide information about whether this should change to encompass other directions in the future.

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point during the study without needing to provide an explanation. You can also withdraw your data after taking part in the study. Your data will be anonymised using a unique code. You will need to provide me with this code if you wish to withdraw your data. This code will consist of the last three letters of your surname and the last three digits of your phone number.

**What will happen if I take part?**

You will need to answer 24 questions based on your knowledge and skills in forensic entomology related to your job. Most are multiple choice and should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

**Use of your data and your rights**

Researchers will be collecting data from your participation in this study. We need these data for a research project that aims to investigate the strengths and weaknesses using entomological evidence in forensic investigation from collection through to providing expert opinion in court. We will be using your data as part of our project and will be publishing the findings to a wider audience. This is the legal basis on which we are collecting your data and while this allows us to use your data, it also means we have obligations towards you to:

* not seek more information from you than what is essential and necessary for the study.
* make sure that you are not identified by the data by anonymising it using ID codes
* use your anonymised data only for the purposes of this study.
* store data safely in password-protected databases to which only the named researchers have access.
* not keep your information for longer than is necessary.
* safely destroy your data by shredding or permanently deleting them.

The study was approved for its ethical standards by the University of Derby Science and Engineering College Research Ethics Committee. Further information about the project can be obtained from the researcher listed below.

**Contacts for further information**

You can contact the project lead, Dr Kate Barnes (k.barnes1@derby.ac.uk) at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We hope that you feel able to take part in the study. If you have any further questions about the study please let us know. If you are happy to take part in the study please sign the consent form.

***Consent Form***

**Study title:** Investigating current issues in forensic entomology: from crime scene to court

* I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I have.  
  □ Please tick box
* I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my data up to two weeks after participating without giving any reason.  
  □ Please tick box
* I agree freely to take part in the study; by ticking this box I am confirming my consent.  
  □ Please tick box

***Questionnaire Questions***

1. Which country do you work in?
2. How long have you been employed in your current position?
3. Were you previously employed in a position using forensic entomology?

If Yes, what was it?

And how long for?

1. What is the main task you undertake?

Collection of evidence

Examination of evidence

Interpretation of evidence

Presentation in court

Research

Teaching/Training

1. Do you also undertake any of the following tasks? Select all that apply:

Collection of evidence

Examination of evidence

Interpretation of evidence

Presentation in court

Research

Teaching/Training

1. I have a good understanding of how entomological evidence should be collected:

1

2

3

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10

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I am confident in applying the correct procedures for collecting entomological evidence:

1

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

8. I am confident in applying the correct procedures for preserving and storing entomological evidence:

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

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1. I am confident in identifying entomological evidence down to species level:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. When would you not feel confident identifying down to species level? Select all that apply:

Specimen in poor or degraded condition

Only received part of specimen

Not a species or family you usually work on

Identification key is only available for a different geographic area to you

Identification key is out of date

Other - text box

1. I have a good understanding of continuity of evidence (chain of custody) in the country where I practice:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I have a good understanding of the legal system in relation to entomological evidence in the country in which I practice:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I have a good understanding of how entomological evidence can be applied in a forensic investigation:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I am confident interpreting entomological evidence to provide specific information in forensic investigation. For example, minimum time since death estimation :

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I am confident appearing as an expert witness presenting entomological evidence in court:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. When I present entomological evidence in court, it is to provide information on (select all that apply):

Minimum time since death

Location of death

Cause of death

Other – text box

1. When entomological evidence is presented in court it is regarded equally as valuable as other types of evidence:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. What do you consider to be the current strengths in utilising forensic entomological evidence in court (maximum 3)?
2. What do you consider to be the current weaknesses in utilising forensic entomological evidence in court (maximum 3)?
3. In the progress of utilising entomological evidence from collection at a crime scene through to presentation of evidence in court, which component is currently the strongest link in the chain?

Collection of specimens

Preservation of specimens

Storage of specimens

Examination of specimens

Identification of specimens

Interpretation of entomological data

Preparing a suitable summary report (statement of evidence or streamlined forensic report)

Presentation of evidence in court

Understanding of entomological evidence by court

Other – text box

1. In the progress of utilising entomological evidence from collection at a crime scene through to presentation of evidence in court, which component is currently the weakest link in the chain?

Collection of specimens

Preservation of specimens

Storage of specimens

Examination of specimens

Identification of specimens

Interpretation of entomological data

Preparing a suitable summary report (statement of evidence or streamlined forensic report)

Presentation of evidence in court

Understanding of entomological evidence by court

Other – text box

1. What could be done to improve the situation in the previous question?
2. Current research is strongly addressing the weaknesses in forensic entomology from collection through to court:

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Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. In my opinion future research needs to focus on the following areas of forensic (maximum of 5):

***Debrief Sheet***

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

The purpose of this study is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of using entomological evidence in forensic investigation from collection through to providing expert opinion in court. This data will be used to see how these strengths and weaknesses match up with current research focus and provide information about whether this should change to encompass other directions in the future.

Your participation is very much appreciated, but if you decide that you would like to withdraw your data from the study then you can do so without needing to give any reason. Please note that this withdrawal must take place within two weeks of your participation.

You can withdraw your data by contacting using the contact details below. You will need to provide your unique code; as a reminder, this consists of the last three letters of your surname and the last three digits of your phone number.

Unique code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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