

Brief Videos During Informed Consent May be Helpful for Participants' Understanding of Study Information

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Introduction

Although an informed consent process is required for all research, it is not clear how well study participants read informed consent forms and understand their content. A systematic review of medical clinical trials revealed participants had only a 50% rate of understanding for concepts of the consent process, including voluntary participation, blinding, and freedom to withdraw, with lower rates for randomization, risks, and safety issues (Pietrzykowski & Smilowska, 2021). This issue may be more pronounced for online research, with a recent study indicating half of participants report not reading informed consent forms at all (Perrault & Keating, 2017). Although increasing interactivity did not improve comprehension in a recent study (Geier et al., 2021), forms of interactivity all still focused on reading and writing (e.g., breaking the form across web pages, asking questions along the way), rather than more engaging presentation styles, such as brief videos. The current study developed videos that were integrated into the informed consent process. The aim of these analyses was to describe participant behavior during the consent process, and the perceived utility of the videos for a fully online ecological momentary assessment (EMA) study.

Method

Participants

- $N = 102$ young adult college students
 - Had to report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days
 - Had to be ages 18-30
- Mean age = 23.6 years; 64% female
- Race: 59% Black, 25% White, 8% Asian, 6% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 6% Middle Eastern/North African (MENA)

Materials

If/how much participants watched the videos

- A single item
- 4 response options:
 - Yes, watched all of them all the way through
 - I started all of them, but did not finish all of them
 - I started some of them, but not all videos
 - I did not watch any of the videos

If participants got all video content

- A single item
- 2 response options:
 - Yes, I either watched the videos or read the scripts in their entirety
 - No, I skipped over some of the content

How helpful the videos were in understanding the study purpose and procedure

- A single item
- 5-point response scale (0 = *Not at all helpful*; 4 = *Very helpful*)

Procedure

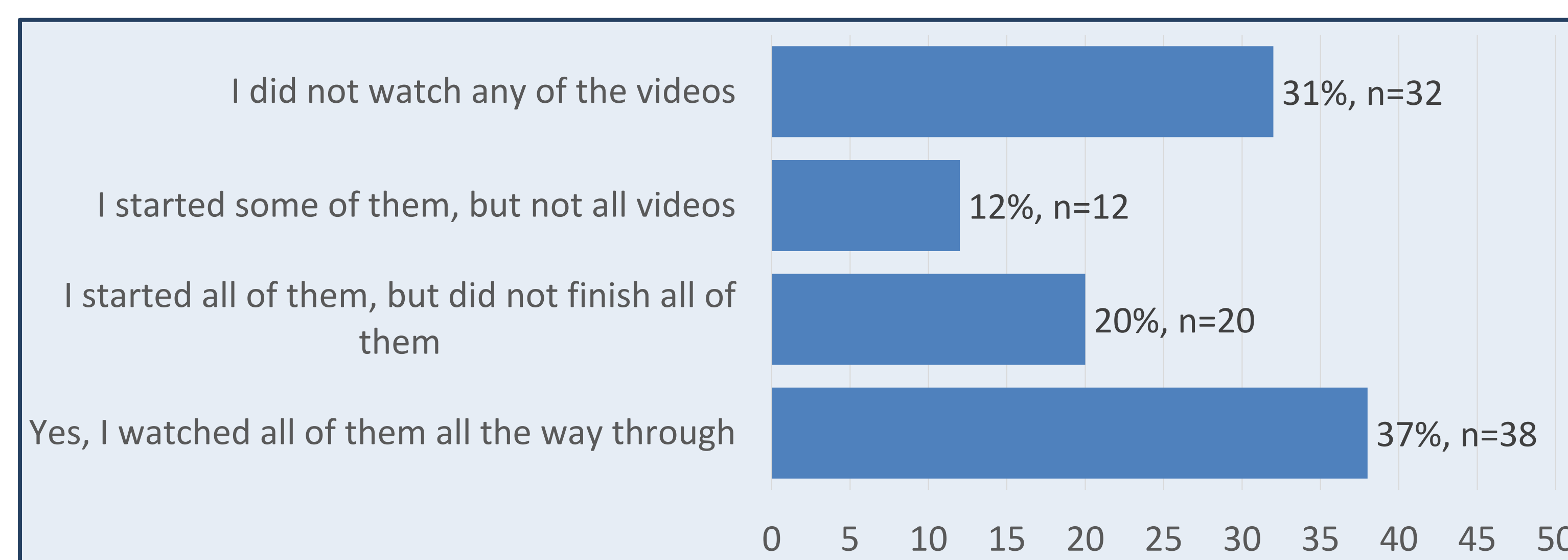
- Fully online/remote examination.
- The full study incorporated EMA with twice-daily assessments for 21 days, beginning with a longer baseline survey.
- Given that median engagement time in educational videos is no more than six minutes (Guo et al., 2014), we broke the information into three brief videos, each less than five minutes.
- The first video provided an overview of the study purpose, and an introduction to EMA research.
- The second video provided more details about survey content and length, timing of the EMA surveys, and study compensation details.
- The third video overviewed study risks, benefits, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.
- The video script was displayed under each video on the webpage.
- At the end of the baseline survey, we asked participants if and how much they watched the videos, if they received all video content, and how helpful the videos were in understanding the study purpose and procedures.

Analysis Approach

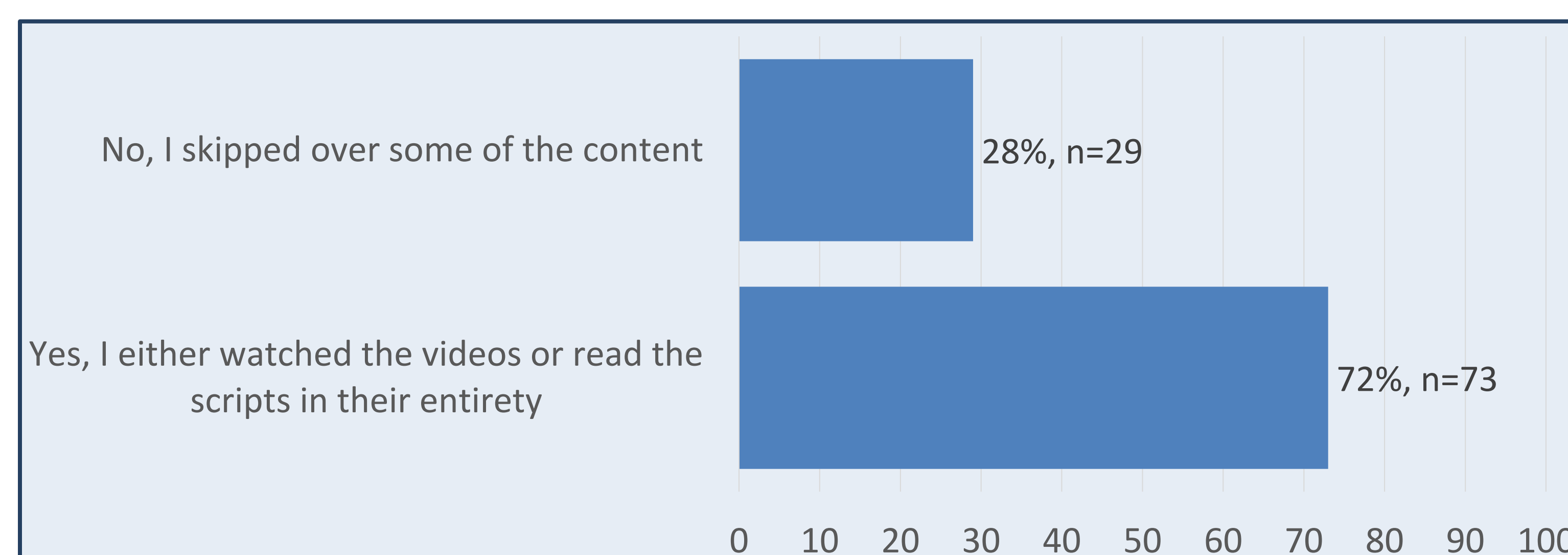
- Descriptive information is presented here

Results

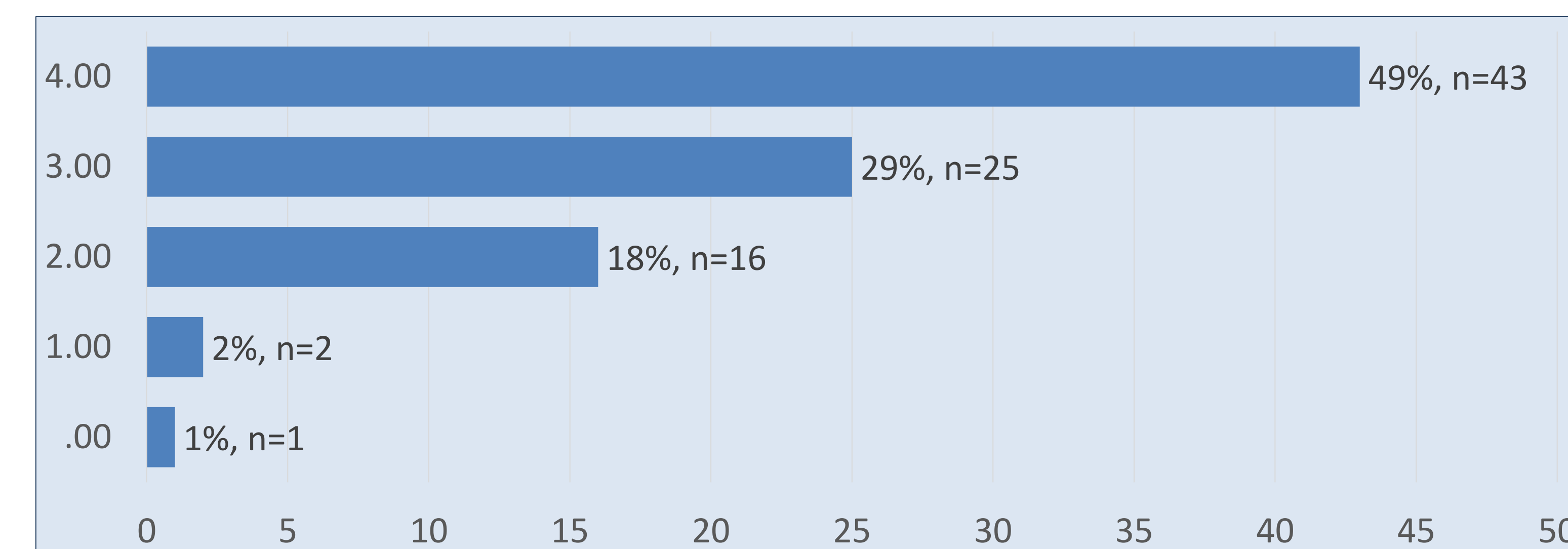
Self-Reported Video Watching



Self-Reported Content Viewing



Helpfulness of Videos



0 = *Not at all helpful* through 4 = *Very helpful*

Findings

- Descriptive information is presented here
- An independent *t*-test indicated no difference in helpfulness across sex

Discussion

Regarding watching, 37% of participants indicated they watched all three videos in their entirety, 20% indicated they started all of them but did not finish, 12% indicated they started some but not all videos, and 31% indicated not watching any of the videos. A strong majority of participants (72%) indicated they received all video content, meaning if they ended the videos early or did not watch them, they fully read the script underneath, with 28% indicating they skipped at least some content. On a scale of 0 (*not at all helpful*) to 4 (*very helpful*), participants rated the videos as fairly helpful in understanding the study purpose and procedures ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.91$). Findings suggest brief videos conveying key content from the informed consent form are both feasible (i.e., easily implemented, with a strong majority of participants indicating they watched the videos or read the scripts in full) and well received (with participants rating them as fairly helpful).

A major limitation of the current study was not assessing comprehension of video content through quizzes on the study procedure or other approaches. Future researchers should assess comprehension, as well as randomizing receiving the videos versus not to generate stronger inferences about the benefits of this approach. In summary, brief videos may be a way to help increase engagement with and comprehension of informed consent forms, particularly for complex studies (such as EMA research).

Take a picture to download more information

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