

---

# Assessing individual differences in attitudes towards touch in treatment settings: Introducing the touch & health scale

Aikaterini Vafeiadou\*<sup>†1</sup>, Natalie C. Bowling<sup>2</sup>, Claudia Hammond<sup>3</sup>, and Michael J. Banissy<sup>4,5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London – United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup>School of Human Sciences, University of Greenwich – United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Sussex – United Kingdom

<sup>4</sup>School of Psychological Science, University of Bristol – United Kingdom

<sup>5</sup>Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London – United Kingdom

## Abstract

Individuals commonly receive touch in treatment settings, but there is limited research on how they perceive it. The current project sought to address this gap by: 1) developing the Touch & Health Scale (THS) - a novel instrument to measure attitudes to touch in treatment settings 2) assessing inter-individual differences in THS scores, and 3) examining the association between individuals' THS scores and wellbeing. Data of a large U.K. adults sample ( $N > 12,000$ ) were used. THS showed Cronbach's  $\alpha$  between 0.636 and 0.816 and significant correlations ( $p < 0.001$ ) with day-to-day attitudes to touch. THS scores differed as a function of extraversion and avoidant attachment style. Participants with more positive attitudes to touch in treatment settings showed greater wellbeing. Overall, the study highlights the importance of a personalised approach to touch in treatment settings and provides a new scale that may act as a screening tool for this purpose.

**Keywords:** attachment style, personality traits, touch attitudes, wellbeing

---

\*Speaker

<sup>†</sup>Corresponding author: kvafe001@gold.ac.uk