

Richard D. Brown

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[Google Scholar](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Researchgate](#) [Open Science Framework](#) [Psychology Today](#)

Research statement

I am a dedicated public health researcher specialising in psychology and behavioural science. My research investigates socioeconomic determinants of health inequalities, and the role that technology plays in determining health behaviours and outcomes. My doctoral studies at Northumbria University focussed on the role that perceptions of environmental risk play in determining health behaviours. My work as a digital health researcher for the Psychology and Communication Technology Lab has involved engaging with multiple stakeholders in health to investigate barriers to the successful self-management of long-term health conditions. My research involves a range of methods, including qualitative interviews and workshops, quantitative surveys of nationally representative samples, as well as secondary analyses of large datasets, evidence synthesis, and natural language processing. I bring robust data science expertise, having been supported by the Alan Turing Institute during my PhD to develop skills in advanced statistical methods, web scraping, and programming in R and Python. Furthermore, my experience in policy research at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology underscores my commitment to translating research into impactful policies for better health outcomes.

Employment

Academic Research Roles

Psychology Department, Northumbria University (2020 – present)

- **Research Fellow:** I currently work as a Research Fellow on the Double Dividend of safety project, raising awareness of the impact of safety conditions on health behaviours and modelling the potential benefits of safety interventions. I also support research conducted under the interdisciplinary research theme [Urban Futures](#). The research takes a human-centred approach to improving health and wellbeing in urban areas.
- **Senior Research Assistant:** I previously worked on the [RHED-C project](#) (Remote Healthcare for Eating Disorders throughout COVID-19), engaging with users of eating disorder services to develop a toolkit for healthcare providers to deliver remote care. This role involved analysing qualitative data from community engagement workshops and quantitative survey data from nationally representative samples. I also worked with key stakeholders to develop a policy document to enhance the impact of the project.
- **Researcher:** I previously worked for the [Centre for Digital Citizens'](#), investigating how technologies and services can be improved to better manage health and reduce inequalities. This involved exploring numerous health issues using a range of methods, including investigating the potential role of medical chatbots for addressing embarrassing and stigmatising conditions. I also directed a web scraping and natural language processing project studying health-related stigma online.
- **Research Assistant:** I previously worked on the [INTUIT project](#), (Interaction Design for Trusted Sharing of Personal Health Data to Live Well with HIV). I conducted qualitative interviews and nationally representative surveys and authored multiple academic outputs. This included first authoring a paper on barriers to successfully managing health data for people living with multiple long-term health conditions.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) (2023)

- I was a [Research Fellow](#), in collaboration with the British Psychological Society, conducting parliamentary reports on [trust in the police](#) and the [use of short prison sentences](#) for use by policy decision-makers.

Teaching Roles

Aranda de Duero, Spain (2017 – 2019)

- I worked as an English teacher for 'The School', a Cambridge English authorised language centre in Spain. My main duties involved planning, coordinating, and administering language courses for all levels.

Hue, Vietnam (2015 – 2017)

- I worked as an English teacher, training coordinator and examiner for the 'English Unlimited Centre', a Cambridge English authorised language centre in Vietnam. I worked closely with the Department of Education and Training in Hue to provide courses for teachers of English in central Vietnam.

Legal Roles

Muckle LLP Solicitors

(2013 – 2015)

- I was admitted to the roll of solicitors for England and Wales in 2015.
- I worked in corporate, banking, and real estate departments.

Education and Qualifications

Northumbria University Psychology Department

PhD in Psychology

(2021 – 2024)

- I studied for a PhD investigating perceptions of risk and socioeconomic determinants of health inequalities.
- #### Master's in Psychology
- (2019 – 2020)
- Psychology MSc (Passed with Distinction).

Alan Turing Institute

(2022 – 2023)

- I was a PhD enrichment student. Receiving data science training to enhance doctoral studies.

Northumbria University Law School

(2010 – 2013)

- Graduate Diploma in Law and Legal Practice Course (Passed with Distinction).

University of Warwick

(2007 – 2010)

- BA Honours in Philosophy (2:1).

Whickham Comprehensive School

(2000 – 2007)

- A levels: Maths (A), Religion (A), Psychology (A).

Grants and Awards

Funding

- Northumbria's Internal Funding scheme. (2023/2024). £10,000. Co-investigator (with Dawn Branley-Bell & Elizabeth Sillence). 'Navigating Generative AI: Perspectives and Policy Insights'.
- Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. (2023). £6,000. Research Fellow.
- Alan Turing Institute Enrichment Fund. (2022). £1,500. Principal investigator.
- [Prolific's Research Grant Competition](#). (2021). £6,000. Principal investigator.
- [European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association](#). (2021). £500. Principal investigator.
- Full doctoral scholarship at Northumbria University. (2021-2023). £46,000. PhD student.

Prizes

- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory: [Future threats and opportunities essay competition](#) (2021). Second Place.
- Early Careers Researcher Conference, Northumbria University (2021). [Best video prize](#).
- British Psychological Society's [PsyPAGg Master's Award](#). (2020) Second Place.

Full List of Publications

2024

- Brown, R. D., & Pepper, G. (2024). The Uncontrollable Mortality Risk Hypothesis: theoretical foundations and implications for public health. *Evolution, Medicine, & Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/emph/eoae009>
- Brown, R. D., & Pepper, G. (2024). The relationship between perceived uncontrollable mortality risk and health effort: replication, secondary analysis, and mini meta-analysis. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaad072>
- Murphy-Morgan, C., Brown, R. D., Love, C., & Branley-Bell, D. (2024). "Some distance between us": a UK mixed methods study exploring experiences of remote care for eating disorders during COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2024.1383080>

2023

- Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., & Pepper, G. (2023). Individual characteristics associated with perceptions of control over mortality risk and determinants of health effort. *Risk Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/risa.14243>
- Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., Coventry, L., Branley-Bell, D., Murphy-Morgan, C., & Durrant, A. C. (2023). Health stigma on Twitter: investigating the prevalence and type of stigma communication in tweets about different conditions and disorders. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1264373. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1264373>
- Sillence, E., Brown, R. D., Dawson, J., McKellar, K., & Neave, N. (2023). Digital hoarding and personal use digital data. *Human-Computer Interaction*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370024.2023.2293001>
- Branley-Bell, D., Brown, R. D., Coventry, L., & Sillence, E. (2023). Chatbots for embarrassing and stigmatizing conditions: could chatbots encourage users to seek medical advice?. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1275127. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1275127>
- Brown, R. D., & Hobbs, A. (2023). Trust in the police. *Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology*. <https://post.parliament.uk/research-briefings/post-pn-0693/>
- Mutebi, N., & Brown, R. D. (2023). The use of short prison sentences in England and Wales. *Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology*. <https://post.parliament.uk/research-briefings/post-pb-0052/>
- Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., & Pepper, G. (2023). Perceptions of control over different causes of death and the accuracy of risk estimations. *Journal of public health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-023-01910-8>
- Isch, C., Brown, R. D., Todd, P., Aktipis, A., & Pepper, G. (2023). Objective risk exposure, perceived uncontrollable mortality risk, and health behaviors. *Journal of public health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-023-01994-2>
- Rathbone, A., Stumpf, S., Claisse, C., Sillence, E., Coventry, L., Brown, R. D., & Durrant, A. C. (2023). People with long-term conditions sharing personal health data via digital health technologies: A scoping review to inform design. *PLOS digital health*, 2(5), e0000264. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pdig.0000264>

2022

- Blythe, J., Brown R. D., & Coventry, L. (2022) The Workplace Information Sensitivity Appraisal (WISA) scale. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*. 100240. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100240>
- Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., & Pepper, G. (2022) A qualitative study of perceptions of control over potential causes of death and the sources of information that inform perceptions of risk. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine*. 10(1): 632-654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21642850.2022.2104284>
- Brown, R. D., Coventry, L., Sillence, E., Blythe, J., Stumpf, S., Bird, J., & Durrant, A. C. (2022). Collecting and sharing self-generated health and lifestyle data: Understanding barriers for people living with long-term health conditions – a survey study. *Digital health*, 8, 20552076221084458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076221084458>
- Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., Coventry, L., Simpson, E., Gibbs, J., Tariq, S., ... Lloyd, K. (2022). Understanding the attitudes and experiences of people living with potentially stigmatised long-term health conditions with respect to collecting and sharing health and lifestyle data. *Digital health*, 8. doi.org/10.1177/20552076221089798

2021

- Brown, R. D., Coventry, L., & Pepper, G. (2021). COVID-19: the relationship between perceptions of risk and behaviours during lockdown. *Journal of public health*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01543-9>
- Brown, R. D., Coventry, L., & Pepper, G. (2021). Information seeking, personal experiences, and their association with COVID-19 risk perceptions: demographic and occupational inequalities. *Journal of risk research*, 24(3-4), 506-520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2021.1908403>
- Brown, R. D. (2021) The WIMDs of change: present and future security concerns associated with Wearable and Implantable Medical Devices. Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. Futures Student Essay Competition. *Ministry of Defence*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-threats-or-opportunities-dstl-student-essay-competition>
- Simpson, E., Brown, R. D., Sillence, E., Coventry, L., Lloyd, K., Gibbs, J., ... Durrant, A. C. (2021). Understanding the barriers and facilitators to sharing patient-generated health data using digital technology for people living with long-term health conditions: a narrative review. *Frontiers in public health*, 9(1747). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.641424>

Other Professional Activity

Teaching and Supervision

I have taught on the following modules within the Psychology department at Northumbria University:

- Quantitative methods. Levels: Foundation, Undergraduate and Masters.
- Qualitative methods. Level: Undergraduate.
- Thesis project supervision. Level: MSc distance learners.

Media and Non-Academic Dissemination

Research which I have authored or co-authored has been featured in the press (e.g., [the Independent](#) and [the Star](#)), as well as in the [House of Lords](#). I have written multiple articles for the [Psychologist](#) and have a regular online column in Psychology Today, entitled [Understanding Health Behaviours](#).

Talks and Conferences

I have given talks at the European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association Conference, Early Careers Researcher Conferences at Northumbria University and presented to the Government's Defence Science and Technology Lab and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology board of ministerial members.

Academic Review

I am a regular reviewer for academic journals, including the American Journal of Human Biology, BMC Psychology, Computers in Human Behavior, Digital Health, Discover Social Science and Health, Ergonomics, Health, Risk & Society, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Health & Well-being, Journal of Medical Internet Research, Journal of Risk Research, npj Digital Medicine, Open Journal of Preventive Medicine, PCI Registered Reports, PLOS One, Psychological Medicine, and Royal Society Open Science.

Professional Training

I have undertaken multiple professional training courses to develop my skills in data science and communicating academic research findings to a broad audience. Recent examples of my professional training include:

- The Conversation. Writing for non-academic audiences.
- Oxford University. Python Programming for Data Science.
- HarvardX. Programming in Python.
- HarvardX. Data science in R.

Referees

Dr Gillian Pepper

(Research supervisor)

Assistant Professor,
Psychology Department,
Northumbria University.

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Dr Dawn Branley-Bell

(Research supervisor)

Director of the Psychology and
Communication Technology Lab,
Northumbria University.

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