



Germ Defence: A digital behaviour change intervention to improve infection control – available for dissemination, translation and adaptation as required

The public can play a crucial role in infection outbreaks, by adopting simple behaviours to curb the spread of infection (such as handwashing, cleaning surfaces, mask wearing and social distancing). By slowing the spread of infection, these behaviours can prevent everyone becoming ill at once, helping healthcare systems to cope until a vaccine is developed. Despite public health advice, evidence shows most people need to change their behaviour to help prevent infection.

Germ Defence (<http://germdefence.org>) was developed during the H1N1 pandemic using the Person-Based-Approach (using theory, evidence and extensive user input), trialled among 20066 patients, and published in the Lancet (available [here](#)). Germ Defence works through several modes of action, was shown to reduce infection and infection transmission in users and their family - and is still the only digital behavioural infection control intervention that has been proven to reduce the transmission of infections in the home. This enhances current public health advice by employing behaviour change techniques such as personalised goal setting that are not (and cannot be) provided in media.



Germ Defence for COVID-19

Researchers and clinicians at the University of Southampton, University of Bath and Public Health England and patient representatives have worked to adapt Germ Defence according to the latest evidence for the COVID-19 outbreak, and made it freely available here: germdefence.org.

In the first week it was made available, with minimal promotion, Germ Defence was accessed over 10000 times, frequently shared on social media and usage analysis shows that users have frequently used it to set personal goals to improve their handwashing.

Disseminating Germ Defence

Digital behavioural interventions such as Germ Defence work best at increasing scale – therefore, please pass on this information to any colleagues who you feel could help ‘cascade’ dissemination both nationally and internationally, but also through the individuals in your local Public Health networks, and/or social media networks, who are able to disseminate information and advice about COVID-19 to the public. You can do this by:

1. Forwarding on this email, and the attached information sheet.
2. Sending on the link: <http://germdefence.org/>.
3. A social media post (Sample: “GermDefence is a free, evidence-based app to help people protect themselves (and household members) from coronavirus through simple behaviours. Try it here: <http://germdefence.org>)

If possible, please let the research team know where you forward the request here: germdefence@soton.ac.uk.

Translating or Adapting Germ Defence

Our research team has resources to rapidly adapt and host Germ Defence in other languages. If you would like to disseminate a specific language version, please choose the correct link from the below version. A list of available language versions is here: <http://lang.germdefence.org/>.

If you would like to help adapt Germ Defence to a language that is not yet available, please contact the research team: germdefence@soton.ac.uk.