

# The cost of 'being strong': exploring the relationship between emotional suppression and wellbeing.

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## 1. Introduction

### Background:

- Previous research has shown that increased use of suppression increases negative wellbeing<sup>[1]</sup>, negative emotion<sup>[2, 3]</sup>, and negative affect<sup>[4]</sup>.
- This study aimed to reproduce this finding, and to introduce two under-studied variables: nationality, and chronic health conditions.

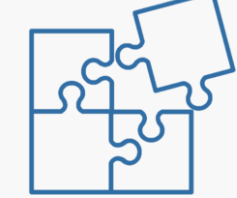
### Aims:

1. Explore the relationship between emotional suppression and wellbeing.
2. Determine whether nationality, or chronic health conditions, impact the relationship.

Guiding principles & key strategies:



Research for Discovery & Impact



Responding to Current & Future Challenges



Visibly Leading

## 2. Methods

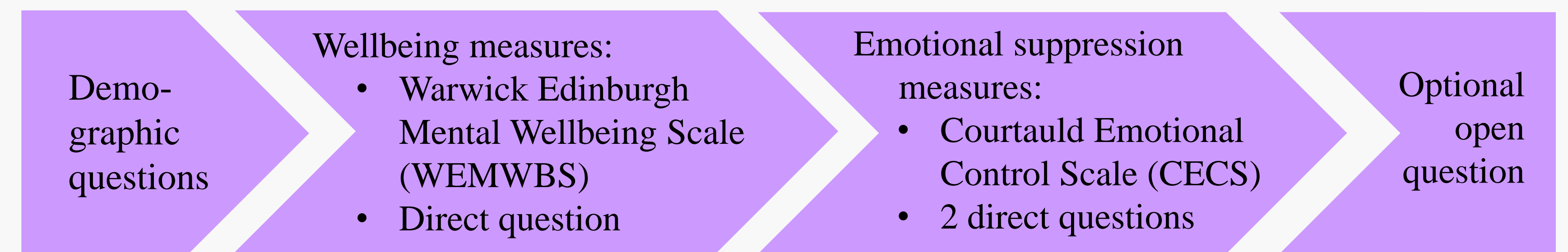
**Design:** a correlational survey study was used to test the relationship between emotional suppression and wellbeing.

**Participants:** 105 responses were collected using opportunity and snowball sampling. After data cleaning, 67 completed responses were used. Ages ranged from 18–83 years old.

### Materials:

- Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (University of Warwick, 2006) ( $\alpha=0.89-0.91$ )<sup>[5]</sup>.
- Courtauld Emotional Control Scale (Watson & Greer, 1983) ( $\alpha=0.83-0.95$ )<sup>[6]</sup>.

**Procedure:** the Qualtrics survey was distributed online. Its key components were:

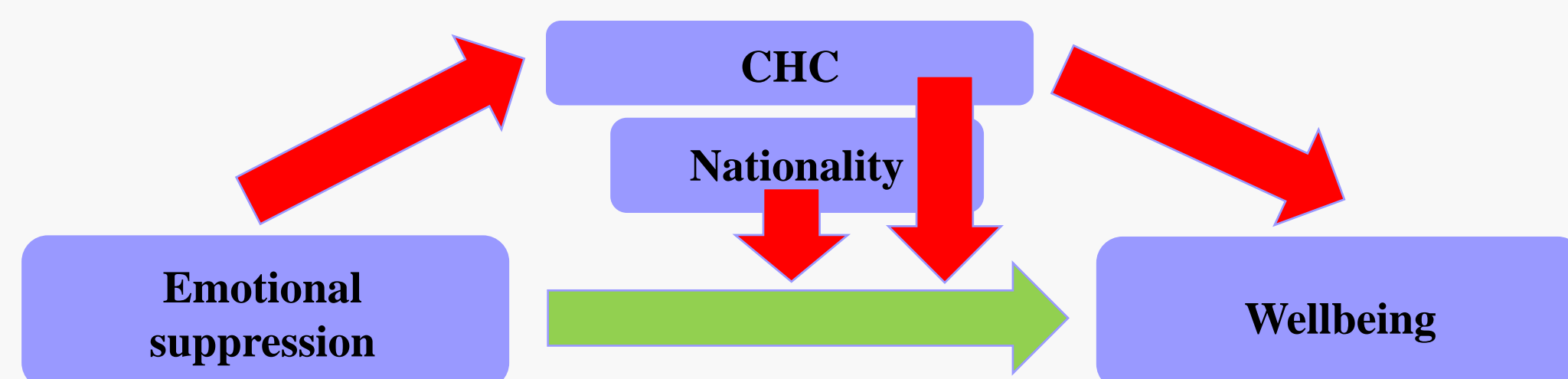


## 3. Results

Table 1. The strength and direction of the significant relationships.

Group	Factor 1	Factor 2	Relationship <sup>[7]</sup>	p-value (significance)
Chronic health condition	Wellbeing	Emotional suppression	Strong negative (-0.610)	p=0.003
British	Wellbeing	Emotional suppression	Moderate negative (-0.508)	p<0.001
All	Wellbeing	Emotional suppression	Moderate negative (-0.444)	p<0.001

Figure 1. Moderation and mediation models (not significant).



- Wellbeing **did** relate to overall emotional suppression, and also **did** in people with chronic health conditions (CHCs), but **did not** in people without CHCs.
- Wellbeing **did** relate to emotional suppression in British people, but **did not** in non-British people. The difference in suppression between British and non-British people was **significant**  $\Rightarrow$  British people had higher suppression.
- Having a chronic health condition, or being British, both **did not significantly** impact the relationship between suppression and wellbeing.
  - Moderation analysis of CHC and nationality was **not significant**.
  - CHC mediation was **not significant**.

## 4. Conclusion

Overall, we found that people with poorer wellbeing suppressed their emotions more. However, this was not significantly influenced by CHC or nationality. This has important applications for patient welfare in the healthcare sector, and for wider societal norms. As our variables were new and our sample was quite small (N=67), we would like to re-run the study over a longer period to determine the findings' robustness.

## References

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