

Reflections on a peer-participatory research approach in understanding the experiences of student midwives at a UK University who identify as Black, Asian or as a Minority Ethnicity.



Dr Claire Clews, Lead Midwife for Education ⁽¹⁾

John Pendleton, Senior Lecturer ⁽²⁾

Aimée Cécile, 2nd year Student Midwife ⁽³⁾

Aim: To present a case study of how the Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton (URB@N) initiative can act as a case study for how to engage undergraduate students with participating in primary research whilst offering a voice to under represented communities.

URB@N project: A qualitative study used a peer participatory approach. A student midwife was recruited to co-produce a semi-structured interview schedule, conduct online interviews with 5 participants, transcribe and anonymise them and collaborated in the development of the themes. (Ethical approval ref: FHSRECHEA00222).



Overview: This group of students are missing from the literature; the need to hear from them is urgent given that evidence acknowledges inequalities to progression and achievement for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in Higher Education as well as barriers for promotion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff within the National Health Service (NHS).

Peer Participatory Research

“Participatory research methods are [aimed at] planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study.” (Bergold and Thomas, 2012: 191).

- **Benefits:** minimise power imbalances between researchers and participants, empower participants - have a voice, reduce bias, access a more representative sample of participants, the potential for future policy and practice to be informed by those with experiential ‘insider’ knowledge (Lushey & Munro, 2015).



- **Challenges:** recruitment and inexperience of peer researchers, ethical considerations, effective research management and mentorship, challenge of the validity of the findings minimising their impact on policy and practice development (Lushey & Munro, 2015).

URB@N study context:

NHS

Workforce Race Equality Standards
(Issar, 2021)

- Nursing: 41.6%
 - NHS: 22.1%
 - Midwifery: 14.6%
 - Managerial positions: 10%
- (NHS Digital, 2020)

HEI

- 'Closing the gap' report (Universities UK/NUS 2019)
- Post 1992 universities
- 'Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged' report (Universities UK, 2020):

"... engage directly with students and staff with lived experience of racial harassment."



Reflections on peer-participatory research: the student's perspective.

[RCM Research & Education Conference 2022 - Peer Participatory Research the Student Experience](#)

Next steps – Local

HEI:

- ‘Decolonise the curriculum’ University wide agenda.
- Seek funding to expand the URB@N research project across a wider group of students from midwifery, nursing, social work and allied health professions.
- Work with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic midwifery students to develop a peer mentorship programme of support.



Practice:

- Present the study findings.
- Link to NHS Trust initiatives aimed at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic NHS staff to explore the development of a sub-group for student midwives.

Next steps – National

- **Publication:** Pendleton, J., Clews, C. & Cécile, A. (in press) 'The experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student midwives as a United Kingdom (UK) university.' *British Journal of Midwifery*
- **Policy:** National Maternity Equity & Equality: Ethnic Minority Workforce Steering Group – NHS England & NHS Improvement (Wendy Olayiwola)

Thank you

Dr Claire Clews, Lead Midwife for Education ⁽¹⁾

Claire.clews@Northampton.ac.uk

John Pendleton, Senior Lecturer ⁽²⁾

John.Pendleton@Northampton.ac.uk

Aimée Cécile, 2nd year student midwife ⁽³⁾



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