

HEALTHCARE THROUGH THE LENSES OF PATIENTS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS

THE OFTEN-UNHEARD STORIES

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- Ethnic Minority Welsh Women Award Winner Science, Health & Technology – 2023
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- Ambassador Maggie's Cancer Support Centres
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- Featured on: BBC Wales, BBC Morning Live, Reuters-Hologic Global Women's Health Index
- Clients include: HEIW, Cansense, Macmillan Cancer Support, USW



WHO AM I?



STORY 1: SURGERY



Bilateral mastectomy with immediate reconstruction using DIEP flap: complications, keloid scarring, necrosis etc. Implantable Doppler to assess blood flow. Capillary refill is much harder to discern in darker skin.

STORY 2: MENTAL HEALTH



Misdiagnosis based on myths and misconceptions around aggression or unconscious bias rooted in lack of cultural understanding.

Grieving Nigerian mother who was wailing and rolling on the floor. Hospital staff thought she was having a mental health crisis and required restraint.



STORY 3: MATERNAL HEALTH & DERMATOLOGY



Skin issues in pregnancy initially thought to be septicæmia. Took 3 nights in hospital and 5 consultants before eczema diagnosis was finally made. This was in East London, an area with significant ethnic minority population. All the GP's consulted in the previous 2 months misdiagnosed the problem and none made a referral to a specialist.

STORY 4: ONCOLOGY



Patient not fully informed how advanced her cancer was, therefore, her family felt unable to ask for palliative support and pain management that she required.

Disempowerment based on assumption that loved ones couldn't understand what needed to be done. She died less than 2 months after diagnosis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



- Better awareness and understanding of difference to be incorporated into the training of healthcare professionals. These must go beyond token gestures like generic, impractical training events.
- Need for culturally sensitive and targeted health campaigns, focused on improving recognition of symptoms among ethnic minorities.
- Concerted efforts to tackle institutional racism in healthcare.

FINAL WORDS



You can be an authority in your area of speciality, but you are not an authority on the patient's lived experience. Engage respectful curiosity when appropriate.

- Bami Adenipekun



ANY
QUESTIONS?

REFERENCES

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