



**BSA Medical Sociology
Conference 2024**

Wednesday 11 - Friday 13 September

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Location: Social Sciences Café Area

Poster 1

“Even if we want help, there is no help”: Exploring perceptions and barriers in home care services within the South Asian communities

Krithika Subbiah, Elena Neiterman

(University of Waterloo)

Background: In Canada, the demand for home care services is increasing due to the growing aging population, characterized by both an increase in the number of older adults and significant diversity. Little is known about how ethnic minorities, particularly South Asian communities, perceive home care services in Ontario, despite being the largest minority in Canada. Recognizing this context, my research aimed to explore South Asian communities' perceptions about home care services in Ontario, the barriers they face, and recommendations to enhance these services.

Aims: The study aimed to explore South Asian communities' perceptions of home care services in Ontario, the barriers they face when accessing these services, and recommendations for enhancing home care services for older adults.

Methods: 13 participants were interviewed, including seven care partners, three South Asian older adults, and three social workers engaging with South Asian older adults. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was used to engage with the data and generate themes.

Result: The study found a significant demand for home care services within South Asian communities. Barriers included challenges experienced by care partners and older adults, such as the impact of the duration of residency in Canada on openness to formal home care, stigma hindering care-seeking, and a lack of awareness about available services. Preferences for culturally competent care, language concordance, and alignment with care providers' gender and ethnicity emerged as significant themes. Participants offered recommendations to improve home care services, aiming to align with the cultural needs of South Asian communities.

Poster 2

Intersectional inequalities for socio-economically disadvantaged women and the impact on the NHS Breast Cancer Screening Programme: A Qualitative Evidence Synthesis (QES)

Emily Lunn, Elijah Work, Jo Cairns, Una Macleod

(Hull York Medical School)

Existing data shows there is a strong association between low socio-economic status (SES) and low breast screening attendance, highlighting the many barriers these women are more likely to encounter when accessing breast cancer screening. SES inequalities do not happen in isolation; people living in disadvantaged areas are also more likely to experience multiple inequalities. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the intersections of these inequalities in order to understand the impact on breast screening attendance.

This QES synthesised evidence from UK qualitative studies that have explored inequalities in the context of breast screening and analysing the findings using an intersectional lens.

Electronic databases MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and ASSIA were searched alongside grey literature. Reliable search filters for inequalities were combined with MeSH and keyword terms for the concept of breast screening.

Search selection included abstract and full-text screening carried out independently by two reviewers (EL/EW). Quality assessment of the included studies was carried out using the CASP checklist. Data was then extracted and synthesised to identify patterns and descriptive themes. Data analysis was conducted within the framework of the Sociocultural Health Behaviour Model.

Exploring the intersections of inequalities for women living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas helps us to better understand the complexities around accessing breast cancer screening. Gaining a rich interpretation of experiences, views, and healthcare beliefs enables us to make future research, policy and practice recommendations to improve breast screening uptake for those experiencing multiple inequalities.

Poster 3

“If someone asks, I’m not holding back”: An exploration of epistemic practices and the epistemic disposition of experiential childbirth knowledge according to women who have given birth

Lea Hostrup

(University of Southern Denmark)

Going through pregnancy and childbirth is an epistemically transformative experience, which can bring new physical, psychological, and relational insights, and thus change the ways in which subjects understand themselves, their bodies, and the world around them. However, it has been argued that the medicalisation of reproductive health care has contributed to a devaluation of the individual epistemic privilege of pregnancy and childbirth. While existing studies on the epistemic value of experiential childbirth knowledge often focus on health care settings, this study explore epistemic practices of women in an array of social settings of their daily life. To explore how childbirth experiences are expressed and shared, in which social spaces, and with references to which kind of knowledge, we conducted two-session semi-structured interviews with nine women who have given birth. In collaboration with a panel of co-researchers with experience of giving birth, we carried out an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the elicited accounts of expressing and sharing information of childbirth experiences in various social contexts.

The interviews presented accounts of complex epistemic practices involving acts of self-censoring as well as seeking for community. Drawing on theory on epistemic injustice, we argue that women's epistemic practices surrounding childbirth experiences are conditioned by societal ambiguities regarding the value of firsthand, embodied childbirth knowledge and perceptions of childbirth as a simultaneously public and private event.

The study provides valuable insights to the complex social and cultural dynamics surrounding perceptions of individual and collective knowledge production connected to the pivotal life event of childbirth.

Poster 4

Were informal (unpaid) carers left behind by the COVID-19 UK restrictions? A mixed methods study

Peter Blaney, Pooja Saini

(Liverpool John Moore's University)

Aims: To investigate informal and formal carers' experiences of the pandemic to ascertain the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and to compare psychological well-being.

Sample: 113 participants; 97 females (28 formal, 69 informal carers) and 16 males (9 formal, 7 informal carers) aged 18+ were recruited using an opportunistic sampling method.

Method: 2x2 Independent groups ANOVA design and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Recruitment via social media for completion of online questionnaires.

Results: Fifty percent of carers had moderate to severe depression, 70% had moderate to severe anxiety and 60% were socially isolated. No significant interactions were evident between the carers' roles and gender in their experience of the restrictions. Thematic analysis revealed three themes: Opinions of COVID-19 restrictions; Psychological impact of restrictions on carers and care-responders; and, Care provided during the restriction.

Conclusion: This study highlights that the UK restrictions left behind informal carers, and as a result, participants experienced further psychological distress, such as depression and anxiety. A future recommendation would be to compare formal, informal and non-carers experiences of the restrictions.