

# Racialised Health Inequalities in Perinatal Services

Monday, 19 August 2024

# Aims of the webinar

- Describe how racialised health inequalities relate to the SPSP Perinatal driver diagrams.
- Explore the current context of racialised perinatal inequalities in Scotland within the global context.
- Understand the intrapartum care experience and outcomes for minority ethnic women and birthing people in Glasgow.

# SPSP Perinatal introduction

**Jo Thomson**

Senior Improvement Advisor

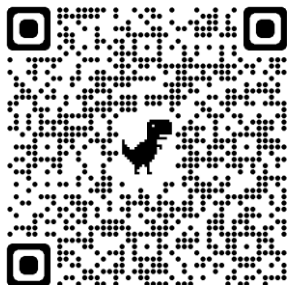
Healthcare Improvement Scotland



# Essentials of Safe Care Driver Diagram

## Aim

**To enable the  
delivery of Safe Care  
for every person  
within every system  
every time**



## Primary Drivers

Person centred systems and behaviours are embedded and support safety for everyone

Safe communications within and between teams

Leadership to promote a culture of safety at all levels

Safe consistent clinical and care processes across health and social care settings

## Secondary Drivers

Structures & processes that enable safe, person centred care

Inclusion and involvement

Workforce capacity and capability

Skills : appropriate language, format and content

Practice : use of standardised tools for communication

Critical Situations : management of communication in different situations

Psychological safety

Staff wellbeing

System for learning

Reliable implementation of Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions (SICPS)

Safe Staffing

# Perinatal Driver Diagrams

What we are trying to achieve...

Reduction in stillbirth

Reduction in Neonatal Mortality and Morbidity

Reduction in harm from deterioration

Understand variation in caesarean births across NHS Scotland

We need to ensure...

Person centred care\* considers the Continuity of Carer approach

Which requires...

Inclusive care pathways which provide equitable and culturally appropriate access and treatment

Change Ideas...

Co-produced person centred care plans consider ethnicity, deprivation and individual communication needs

Social determinants addressed through onward referral to appropriate services

Staff afforded flexibility to provide care proportionate to need for those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage

Provision of timely interpretation services support

Local education for staff to enable support for those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage

Staff able to identify, challenge and change the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism

*\*Essentials of Safe Care*

# Scottish Government - Short life working group

- Work launched January 2023
- Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary representation
- 5 meetings across 2023-2024
- Outputs from the group being finalised

# Disrupting the Future of Racialised Perinatal Disparities in Scotland

**Isioma Okolo**

Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist

NHS Forth Valley

[www.drisiomaokolo.com](http://www.drisiomaokolo.com)



# No Conflict of Interest

- RCOG Race Equality Taskforce
- Scottish Government Short Life Working Group
- Director of KWISA
- Trustee AMMA Birthing Companions





# Outline

- Important terminology
- Global statistics
- Scottish picture
- Evidence base & interventions
- My reflections
- Useful resources
- \*jade summary slides

# Learning Objectives

1. Describe patterns of racialised perinatal inequities in Scotland
2. Distinguish between race, ethnicity & class
3. Recognise racism as a structural determinant of perinatal health
4. Be aware of evidence base for interventions
5. Appreciate that racialised perinatal disparities are directly linked to safety and quality of care



# Race ≠ Ethnicity ≠ Class

*Social NOT biological classifications based on:*

**Race** = artificially defined groups assigned in the 17<sup>th</sup> century around colonialism & eugenics.

**Ethnicity** = cultural ancestry, religion, language, diet, physical characteristics, affinity to racial categories.

**Class** = economic status, wealth, income, educational attainment, occupation.



# A Quick Note on Intersectionality

- Our systems are set to a default
- You are more likely to experience adversity if you are not the default
- There is nothing innately wrong with Black and Brown bodies



# Structural Determinants of (Perinatal) Health

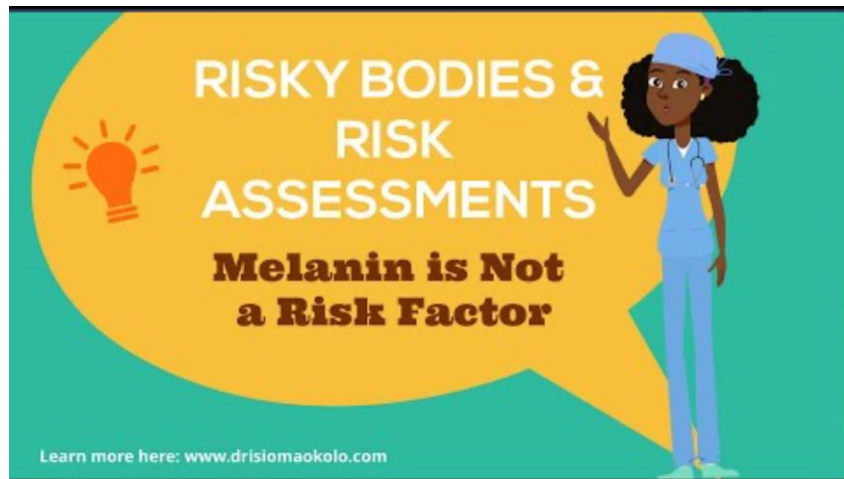
## SDH

The most important  
80% of your life

Conditions in which you are  
born, educated, work and age.

\*genetics

\*access to health care



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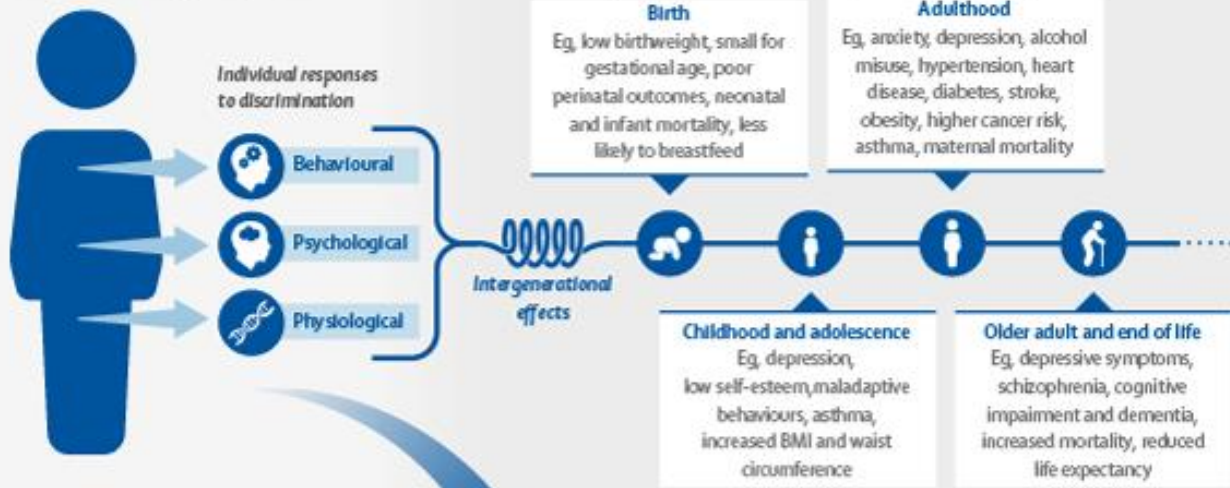


# Racialised Perinatal Disparities are Linked to Racism

## Racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and health

Discrimination occurs everywhere, adversely affecting mental and physical health across all ages, contributing to health inequities

### An individual perspective



### The big picture

Health and health inequalities are determined by active, complex, and constantly evolving processes

#### Spatial determination

Environmental, ecological, and geographical factors affecting health — the interface between the multiple

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The *Lancet* Series on racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and health

# In Summary

1. Race is a social construct not a biological phenomenon
2. Systemic and institutional racism are structural determinants of health

Behavioural changes

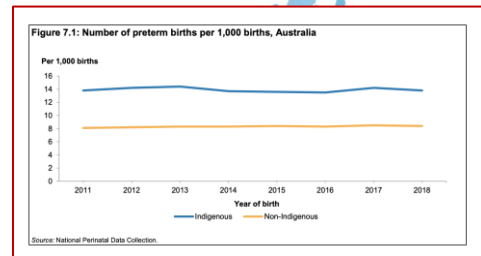
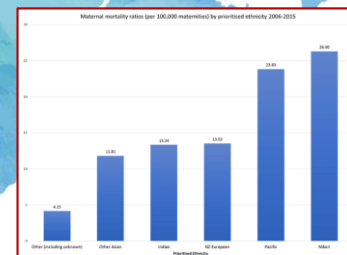
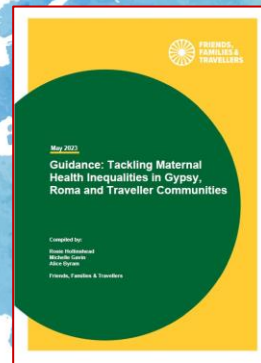
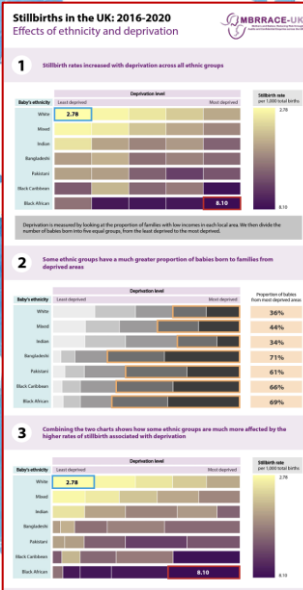
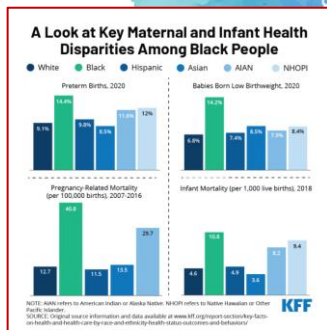
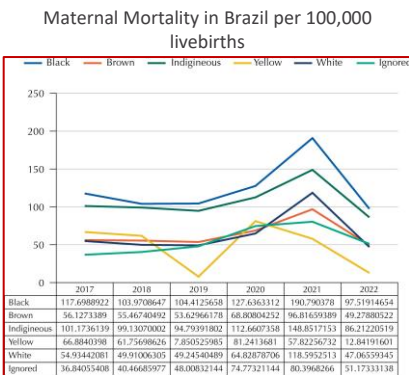
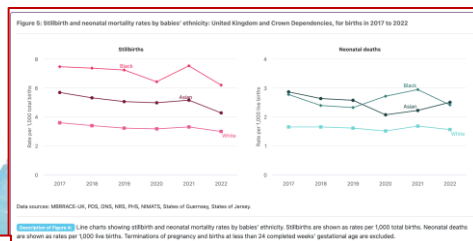
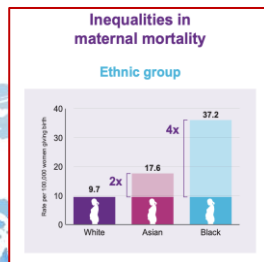
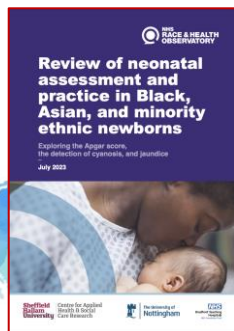
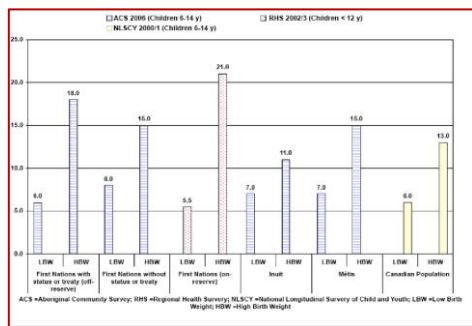
Physiological changes: exposure to allostatic stress

Psychological changes

3. The way we treat pregnant womxn and people matters (during and beyond pregnancy)

Differential access  Differential experience  Differential outcomes

# Global Picture of Perinatal Disparities





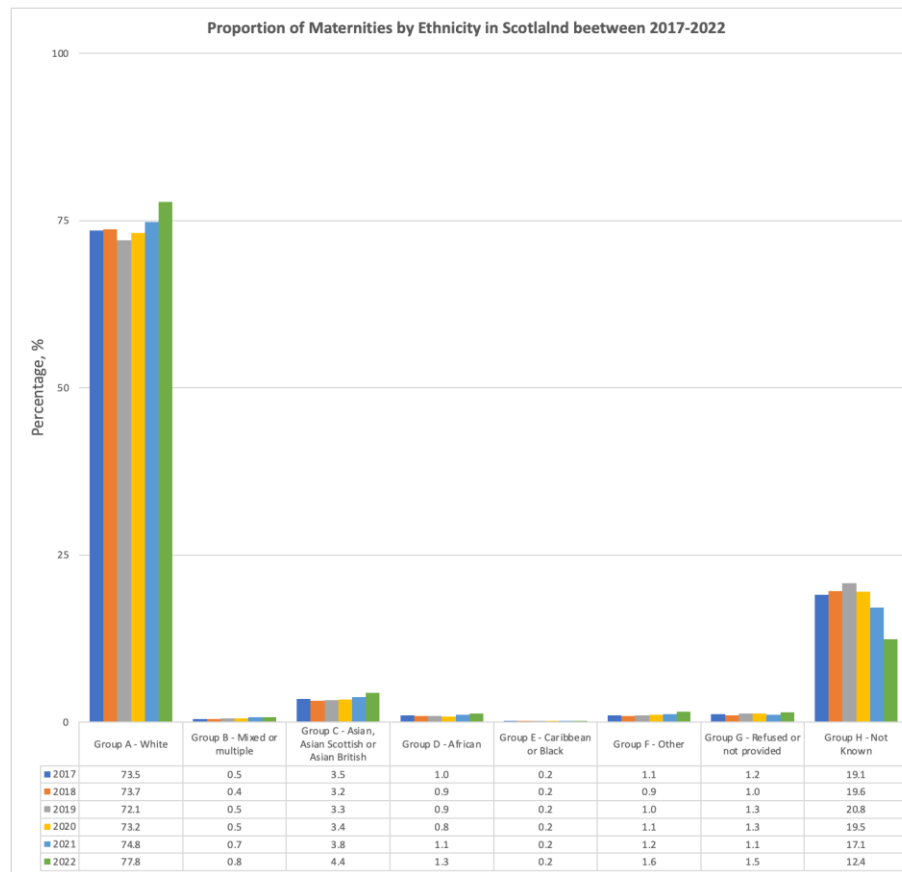
# Scotland: Birth Statistics (2023)

11% of maternities were ethnic minority women

- 5.4% Asian
- 2.2% African

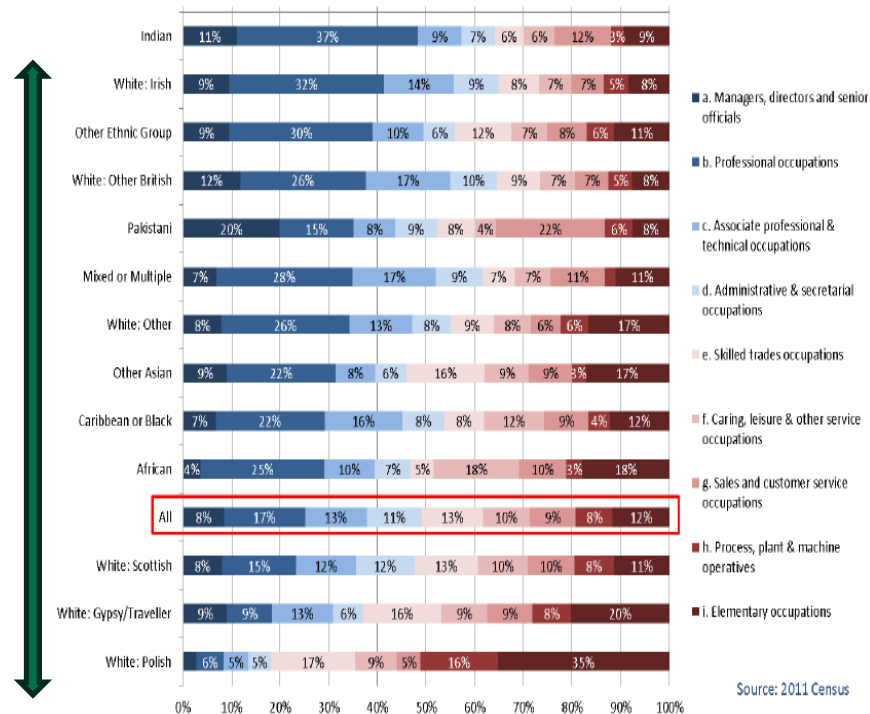
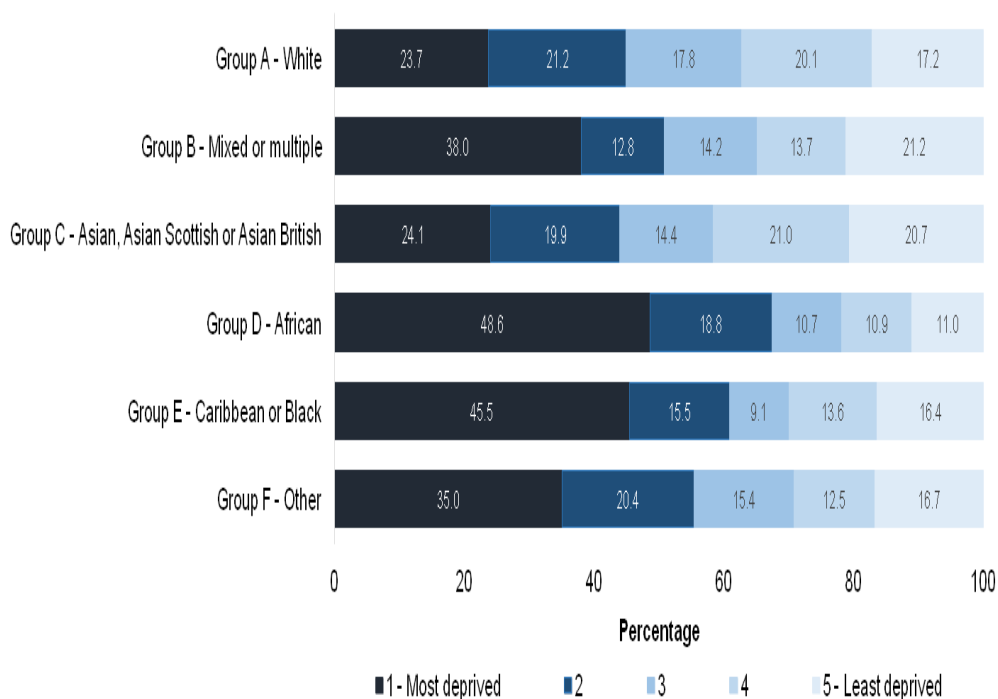
Majority of these women cared for in NHS GGC (50%), Lothian and Grampian.

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# Scotland: Birth Statistics (2022)

Percentage of maternities with a known ethnicity, by deprivation category



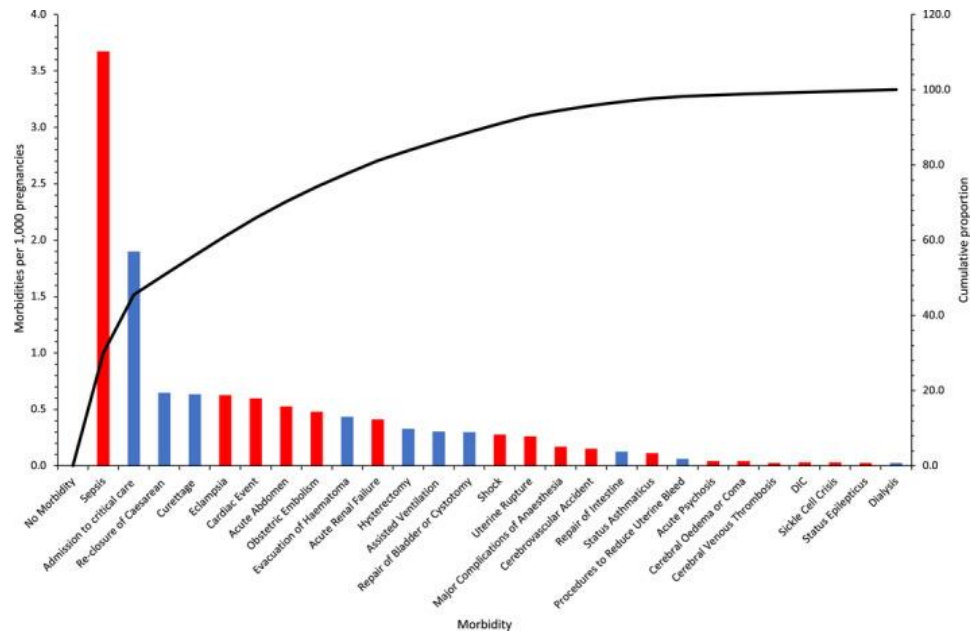
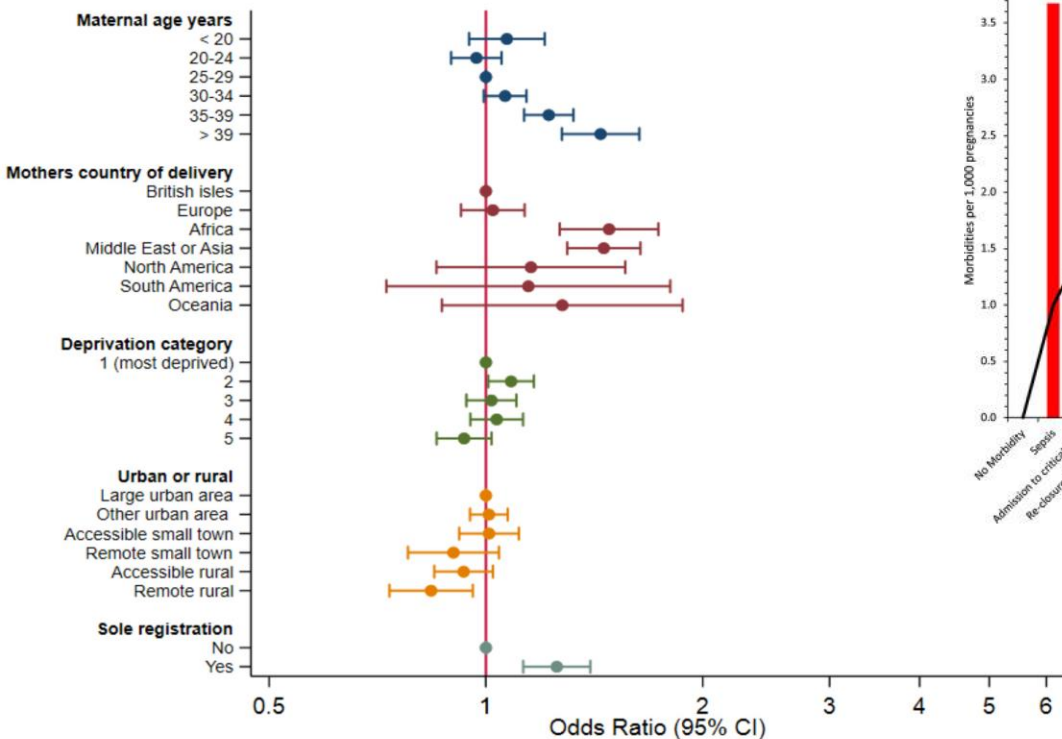
Source: 2011 Census

Ethnic Group by Occupational Group, people aged 16-74 in employment 2011 Census

# Scotland: Severe Maternal Morbidity

Masterson JA, Adamestam I, Beatty M, et al. Severe maternal morbidity in Scotland. *Anaesthesia*. 2022;77(9):971-980. doi:10.1111/anae.15798

(a)



Pareto chart of the rates of 26 severe maternal morbidities per 1000 pregnancies, conditions (red) and procedures (blue). The black line is the cumulative proportion for all severe morbidities. DIC, disseminated intravascular coagulation.

# Scotland: Health & Ethnicity Linkage Study (2014)

## Ethnic minoritised womxn had healthier maternal health behaviours

- Non-smokers
- Breast feeding

## Healthy Migrant Effect\*

- Healthier than minoritised UK born womxn

## More likely to live in economic deprivation

- Older at booking (except Pakistani womxn)
- Overweight or BMI
- Small for gestational age babies
- Pre-term birth

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of EDINBURGH

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*Usher Institute*

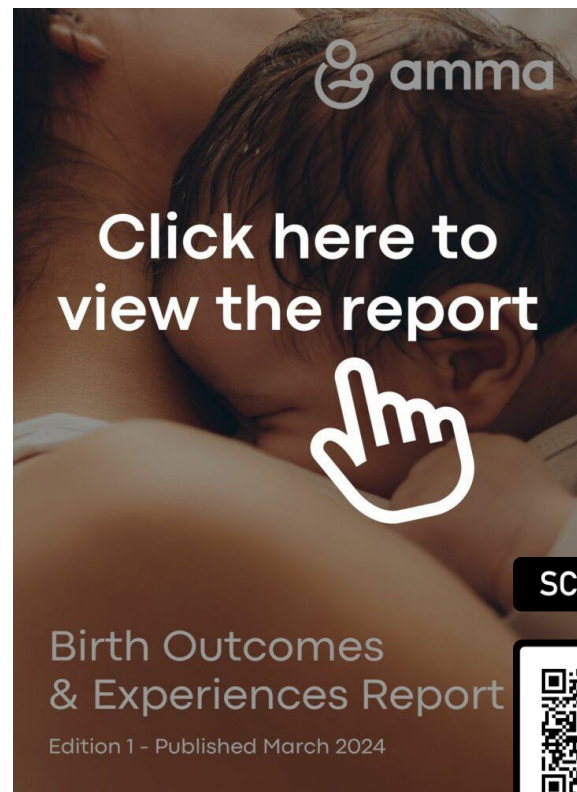
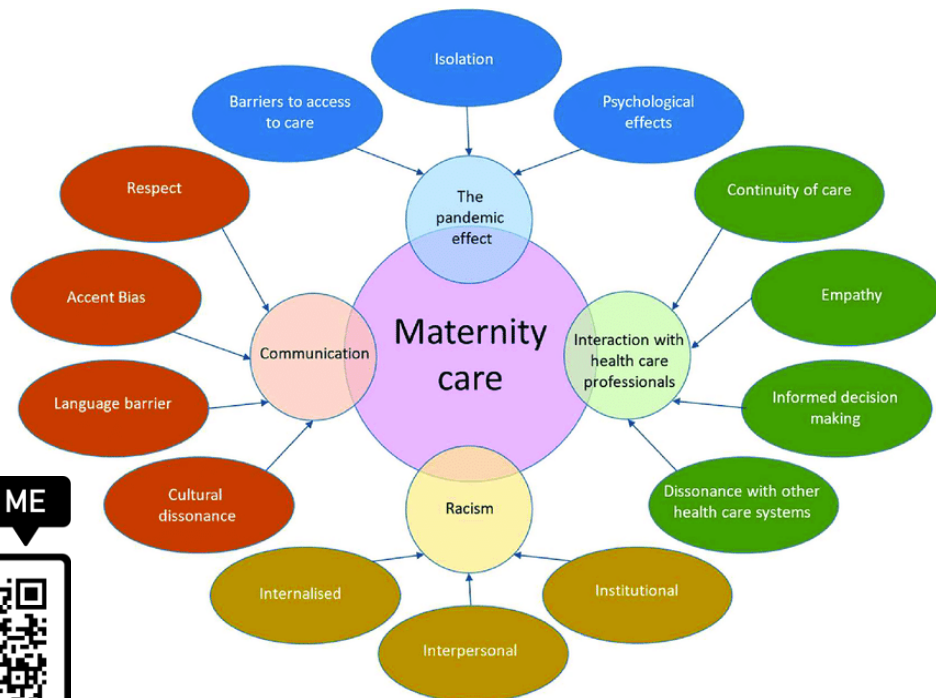
SCOTTISH HEALTH AND ETHNICITY LINKAGE STUDY

# Scotland: Experience of Care

John JR, Curry G, Cunningham-Burley S.

**Exploring ethnic minority women's experiences of maternity care during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic: a qualitative study**

*BMJ Open* 2021;**11**:e050666. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-050666



# In Summary

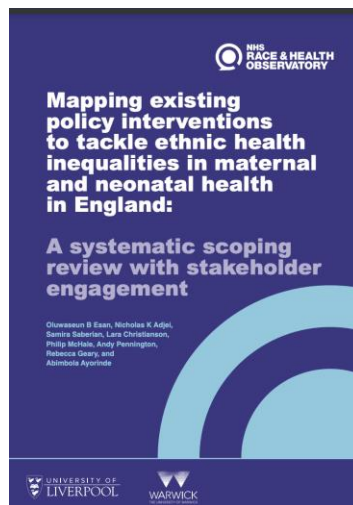
Pregnant womxn in Scotland are more likely to live in deprivation.

Racially minoritised pregnant womxn make up a higher proportion of the pregnant population than the general population

Scotland shares similar patterns in perinatal inequities to other regions of the world despite racialised minorities making up a smaller proportion of the Scottish population than other parts of the world.

# Evidence Based of Interventions

- 2009 systematic review (TOG)
- 2023 Scoping review (RHO)



## Effective or promising interventions

### Health advocacy for non-English speaking women

Effective in increasing the length of antenatal stay (reducing antenatal care dropout rate) and lowering the rates of induction of labour and elective caesarean section

### Link and bilingual workers

Increases Asian women's satisfaction with services and may increase their knowledge of health services and healthy practices, particularly breastfeeding

### Prepregnancy defibulation for female genital mutilation

Has the potential to reduce the risk of haemorrhage and severe pain during childbirth

### Training of lay women and multilingual pharmacists

May result in increase in the uptake of health education messages

### Health advocacy

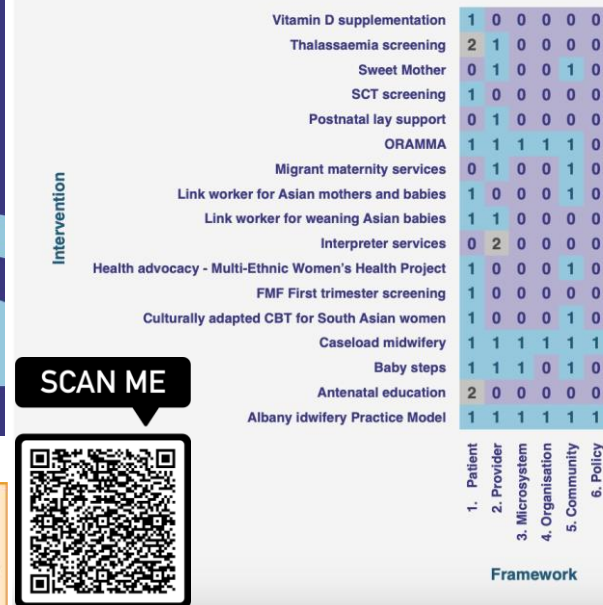
Unlikely to improve late booking, nonattendance at antenatal clinics and rates of low birthweight

### Link worker services

Unlikely to improve the time of booking, gestational age at delivery and rates of low birthweight

## Interventions that have not been found to be effective


Figure E1 Map of identified interventions and levels of the conceptual framework



# Interventions: Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health Safety Bundle (USA)

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	Systems	Service User	Service Provider
<b>READINESS</b>	Medical records that capture race & ethnicity	<p>Awareness on importance of race &amp; ethnicity reporting</p> <p>Engage strategic users, families and community advocacy groups in quality and safety leadership initiatives</p>	<p>Awareness and education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Racial disparities and their root causes</li> <li>- Enquiry and documentation of demographics</li> <li>- Availability and use of interpreter services</li> <li>- Shared decision making</li> </ul>
<b>RECOGNITION &amp; PREVENTION</b>	Reporting mechanisms for examples of inequitable care, disrespect, racism for users and providers	Access to health records	Implicit bias training
<b>RESPONSE</b>	<p>Timely response to reports of inequitable care</p> <p>Life course approach to contraception</p>	<p>Robust safety netting on discharge</p> <p>Provision of culturally, health literacy appropriate information leaflets</p>	
<b>REPORTING &amp; LEARNING SYSTEMS</b>	<p>Disparity dashboards disaggregated by race, ethnicity that are regularly disseminated</p> <p>Apply equity lens in SAER reviews</p> <p>Develop QI projects aimed at reducing disparities in experiences, treatment, outcomes</p>	Review complaint, compliments and litigation by race & ethnicity	<p>Foster inclusive and psychologically safe work cultures</p> 



# Interventions: Cultural Safety (Aotearoa New Zealand)



*Irihapeti Ramsden*

## TRANSLATING CULTURAL SAFETY TO THE UK THE CULTURAL SAFETY TREE

### BRANCHES/LEAVES/ FLOWERS/FRUIT:

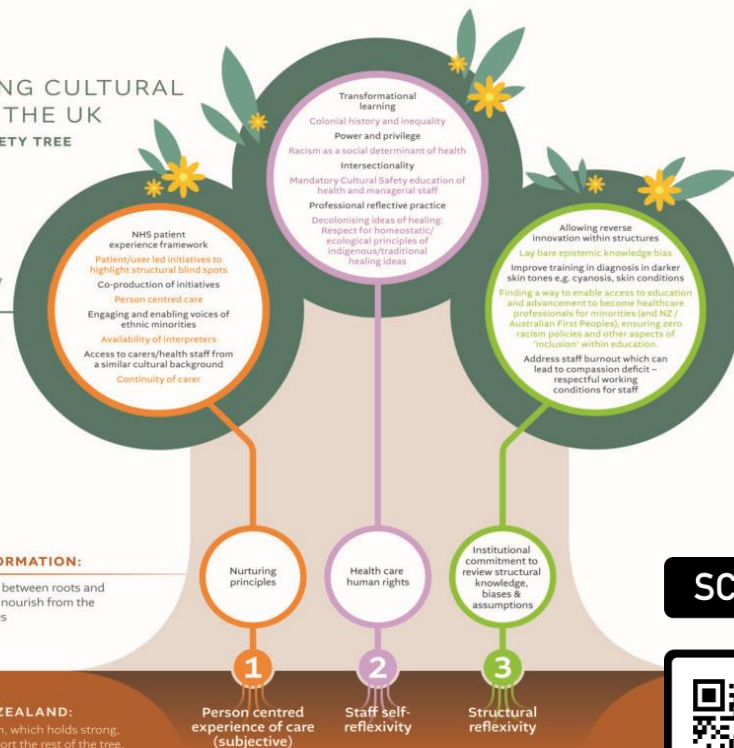
Pre-existing UK discussions about improving healthcare that would translate into the Cultural Safety model. These could blossom and bear fruit.

### TRUNK OF TRANSFORMATION:

Symbolic of the connection between roots and leaves which is a conduit to nourish from the ground through to the leaves

### ROOTS FROM NEW ZEALAND:

A Cultural Safety foundation, which holds strong, without which will not support the rest of the tree.



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THIS INFOGRAPHIC IS FROM AN ARTICLE CALLED TRANSLATING CULTURAL SAFETY TO THE UK, PLEASE READ FULL PAPER, LOKUGANAGE AU, RIX E, FLEMING T, HENEDITH A, KHETAN, T, HASTIE C.

# Applying Equity Lens & Systems Learning to Adverse Events Review



*Consider the role of race, ethnicity, language, poverty, literacy and other complex social factors when conducting multidisciplinary reviews of severe maternal morbidity, mortality, complaints and other clinically important metrics.*



Did the individual affected in this case have an equity risk factor? YES/NO/MAYBE  
( If yes please tick all that apply)



Did any of these equity risk factors contribute to their outcome? YES/NO/MAYBE  
( If yes please tick all that apply)



If so, are there systems changes that can be implemented to change things?

# GRADE 4 Evidence: expert opinion

Prusova, K & Tyler, A & Churcher, L & Lokugamage, Amali. (2014). **Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists guidelines: How evidence-based are they?**.

Journal of obstetrics and gynaecology : the journal of the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 34. 1-6. 10.3109/01443615.2014.920794.

40% of evidence from RCOG guidelines were lowest grade E-based on "expert opinion"

Table II. The classification scheme for the recommendations by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Classification scheme for recommendations by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	
Pre-December 2007	
A	At least one randomised controlled trial as part of a body of literature of overall good quality and consistency addressing the specific recommendation.
B	Requires the availability of well controlled clinical studies but no randomised clinical trials on the topic of recommendations.
C	Requires evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experiences or respected authorities. Indicates an absence of directly applicable clinical studies of good quality.
D	Recommended best practice based on the clinical experience of the guideline development group.
Post-December 2007	
A	At least one meta-analysis, systematic review or randomised controlled trial rated as 1++ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results.
	A systematic review of randomised controlled trials or a body of evidence consisting principally of studies rated as 1+ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results.
B	A body of evidence including studies rated as 2++ directly applicable to the target population, and demonstrating overall consistency of results.
	Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 1++ or 1+.
C	A body of evidence including studies rated as 2+ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results.
	Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 2++.
D	Evidence level 3 or 4.
	Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 2+.
E	Recommended best practice based on the clinical experience of the guideline development group.



The expert is either always in the room or never in the room

# Community participation: NHS Lothian



- Cultural safety
- Relationship (trust) building
- Bidirectional education
- Power
- Working within the system

## What Matters to You?

“Humanising the birth experience - remembering mums are people too!”

“INFORMATION - before, during and after. ‘You don’t know what you don’t know’”

“I want the best possible opportunities for health, wellbeing for every individual regardless of social status, background, colour, faith, gender or other diversity”

“Feeling safe and heard as a black woman when pregnant, in the healthcare setting.

“I matter”

“Support for first mothers from ethnic minority background during pregnancy”

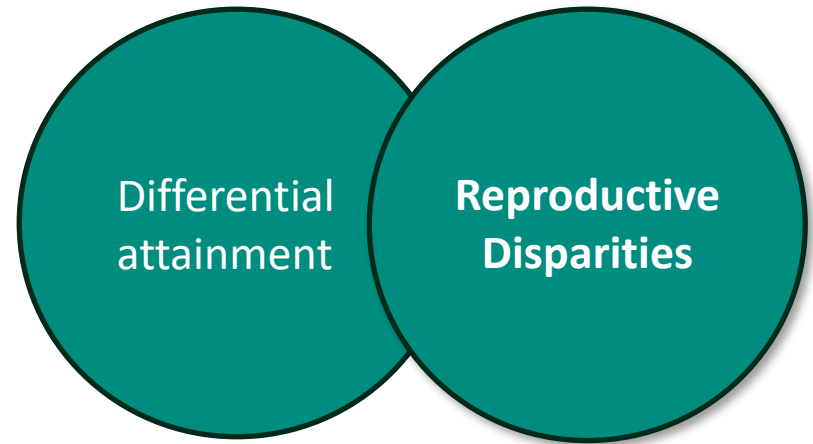
Continuity of care and family support prenatally, antenatally and postpartum

## What did the Women Share With Us?

- Feeling alone and unsupported
- Not being given basic information about what was happening to them during induction, labour, difficult delivery, and miscarriage
- Not being listened to when their instinct was telling them something was wrong
- No being given any choice and no involvement in the decisions
- Bad pain management especially during and after C section and for tear repair
- Challenges of being alone on the PN ward and after leaving hospital - limited follow up
- No family support to fall back on
- Financial insecurity
- A few women had positive experiences because their midwife supported them fully, providing empathy, humanity and compassion which helped them feel in control and supported even through difficult and potentially traumatic births.

# The NHS is an ANCHOR Institution (can level the playing field)

- Employment (income)
- Differential attainment
  - Recruitment, progression, retention
- Healthy workplace culture
  - Discrimination & racism
  - Psychological safety
  - Inclusion & belonging





# Achieve Accountability with Clinical Governance

## 1. Multi-disciplinary and cross sector collaboration

- Including patients, and community groups
- Co-creation through engagement NOT consultation

## 2. Data

- Disaggregated
- Linked to KPIs, SAER, Complaints & compliments
- Proactively tracked (disparity dashboard & audits)

## 3. Education

- Training (case based, simulation, multi-disciplinary, mandatory)
- Cultural safety and anti-racism
- Guidelines
- Patient information leaflets
- Bidirectional

## 4. Innovate using QI and research



# In Summary

Racialised perinatal inequalities are examples of unsafe and poor-quality care.

Race is a social construct not a biological phenomenon( distinct from ethnicity)

To tackle racialised perinatal disparities we must address structural determinants of perinatal health including racism

To advance we must disaggregate, monitor, respond to and learn from disparities

Clinical governance is the accountability key to move

Solutions should combine lived and professional expertise



# Useful Resources

## Terminology

[Glossary of terms relating to ethnicity & race](#)

[Risky Bodies & Risk Assessments: melanin is not a risk factor — DR ISIOMA OKOLO](#)

[A race to the finish line \(wiley.com\)](#)

[Why cultural safety rather than cultural competency is required to achieve health equity: a literature review and recommended definition | International Journal for Equity in Health | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

## Global Statistics

[The Lancet Series on racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and health](#)

<https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrace-uk/reports> (UK)

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/slide/a-look-at-key-maternal-and-infant-health-disparities-among-black-people/> (USA)

[Monitoring racialised health inequalities in Scotland 30 May 2023 - Monitoring racialised health inequalities in Scotland - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

[SciELO - Brazil - Racial disparities and maternal mortality in Brazil: findings from a national database Racial disparities and maternal mortality in Brazil: findings from a national database](#) (Brazil)

[Figure 1 from Indigenous Birth Outcomes in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States – an Overview | Semantic Scholar](#) (Canada)

## Interventions

<https://www.ihl.org/resources/publications/black-maternal-health-reducing-inequities-through-community-collaboration#downloads>

[Translating Cultural Safety to the UK \(bmj.com\)](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/research/mapping-of-existing-policy-interventions-to-tackle-ethnic-health-inequalities-in-maternity-and-neonatal-health-in-england-a-systematic-scoping-review-with-stakeholder-engagement/>

<https://saferbirth.org/psbs/archive-reduction-peripartum-disparities/>

<https://www.ihl.org/resources/publications/black-maternal-health-reducing-inequities-through-community-collaboration#downloads>

# Intrapartum care experience and outcomes for minority ethnic women and birthing people in Glasgow

**Nicola O'Brien**

Midwife Led Intrapartum Care Project Midwife  
Princess Royal Maternity, NHS Greater Glasgow  
& Clyde



# Ethnicity and Healthcare

Pregnancy in the UK remains safe, however inequities in care still exist. Women from minority ethnicities and those living in the most deprived areas still have higher rates of morbidity and mortality within maternity.

Women from these groups continue to have higher rates of:

- Preterm birth before 32 weeks
- Stillbirth
- Neonatal Death
- Caesarean births
- Post partum Haemorrhage > 1500ml

Relative rate of poverty in Scotland:

- 50% of Asian or Asian British
- 51% of Mixed, Black or Black British
- 22% for White – other
- 18% White British



# Cultural Safety

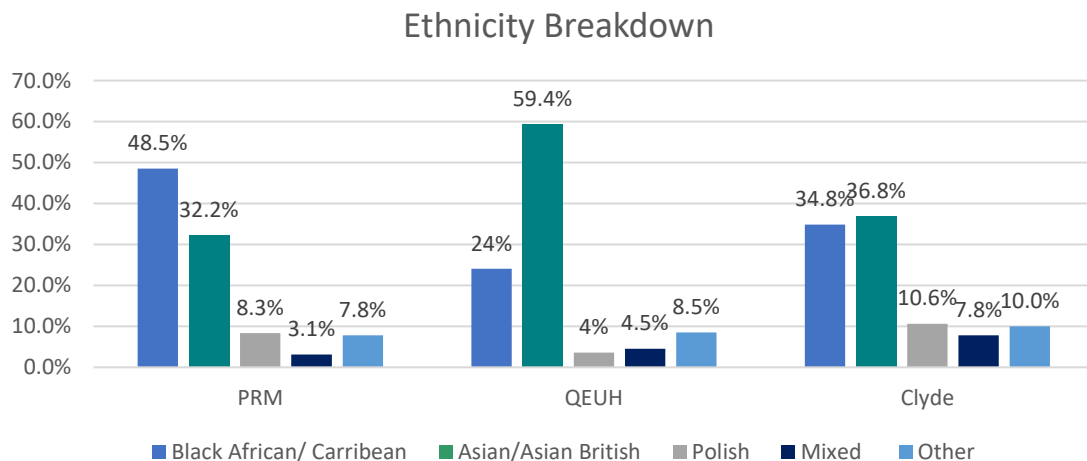
*Cultural Safety can be described as a set of principles which includes behaviours, attitudes and policies within a system or profession that enables effective working in cross-cultural situations*

*It is an ongoing process in which health and care service providers and professionals actively work to provide for the needs of the individual, family or community in a way that recognises and incorporates an appreciation of their diverse beliefs, values and expectations.* (Campinha-Bacote J, 2002)

# Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Greater Glasgow and Clyde has one of the largest populations of Black, Asian and minority ethnicity families in Scotland.

Within our Glasgow maternity units, over 31% of our population descends from minority ethnicities



Artisan Artworks: Princess Royal Maternity Hospital

# Focus Groups

8 Focus groups with a total of 33 women and 14 support workers from Amma Service, British Red Cross and Roma Workers. 2 focus groups with 15 midwives in 2022

"When we are alone without the birthing partners they do not listen to us" – Mixed ethnicity

"NHS staff should understand different communities and cultures instead of making assumptions." – Mixed ethnicity

'women have said "they don't feel valued" and "tone of voice different when speak to white women" by some reception area staff' - Midwives

'...interpreter phone based system is a barrier for emergencies. Staff reports of interpreters lack of availability (for Vietnamese, Amharic, Tigrinya, Omaro).' – Midwives

"Midwives don't check if patient can read and write English or their own language. Information often handed over without checking if they will be able to read the material". – African group

"They do not believe the pain we were going through and did not provide any pain relief. Unless the support workers intervene and ask on our behalf" - African group

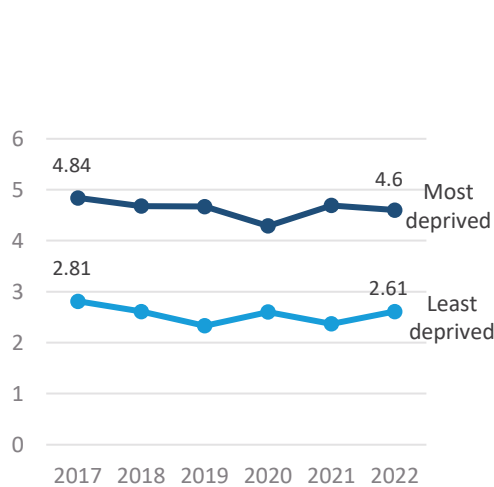


# Perinatal Outcomes

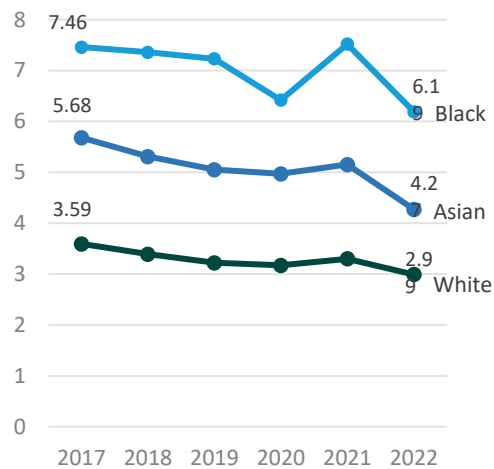


UK Stillbirth rate per 1,000 births

## Deprivation

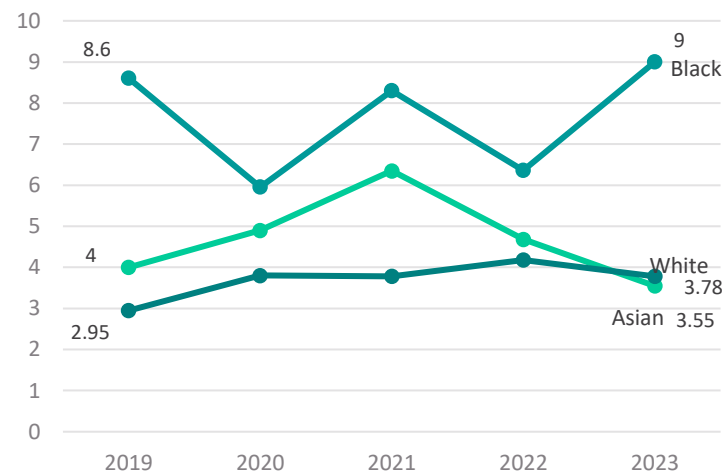


## Ethnicity



GGC Stillbirth rate per 1,000 births

## Ethnicity

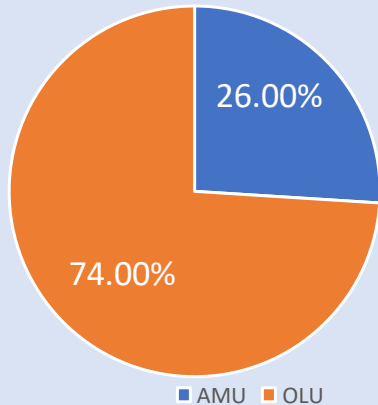




# PRM Low Risk Intrapartum Care

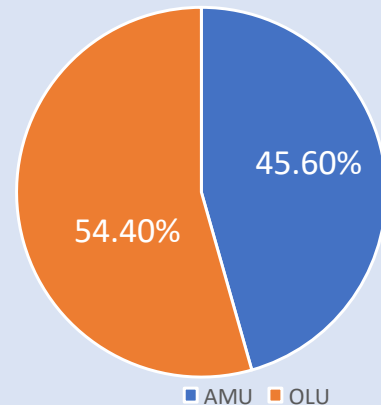
13.8% of our minority ethnic population in the Princess Royal were identified as low risk compared to 14.3% of White British women.

% OF LOW RISK MINORITY ETHNIC WOMEN ADMITTED TO OLU VS AMU



55.9% of low risk minority ethnicities were incorrectly risk assessed vs 24.4% of low risk white women

% OF LOW RISK WHITE BRITISH WOMEN ADMITTED TO OLU VS AMU





# Care Outcomes

Intrapartum/ Birth	Minority Ethnicities	White British
CTG no indication	43%	18%
Fetal Scalp Electrode	17%	15.4%
Intrapartum Syntocinon	9%	6.9%
Spontaneous Vaginal Birth	86.8%	81.6%
Unplanned Caesarean Births	6%	5%
PPH > 1000mls	7.5%	8.8%
Episiotomy	16.9%	10%
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Degree tear	7.5%	7.3%

Neonatal	Minority Ethnicities	White British
Neonatal Resuscitation	5.7%	4.4%
Low Cord PH	3.7%	1.5%
Neonatal Admissions	1.8%	0%

# Common Themes

- Incorrectly labelled as 'Late booker'
- Previous FGR or LGA baby but growth normal this pregnancy
- Asylum seeker or doesn't speak English
- Incorrectly labelled as 'Induction'
- Poor Communication



# Antenatal Case Studies

1

## Fatima Afzal

33 yr. old 1+0

2020: SVB at 40+1. 2524g at birth (<3rd Centile)

Booked in GGC at 33 weeks. Originally from Somalia. Had initial antenatal care in London. Speaks Arabic. BMI 17.5

### Risk Assessment:

Previous baby < 3rd centile. Asylum Seeker with limited English. BMI < 18 at booking.

## CASE STUDIES



2

## Blessing Abioye

18 yr. old 2+0

2022: SVB at 40+6. 4.5kg (99<sup>th</sup> Centile)

2023: DCDA Twins at 36+5. T1 SVB 2600g (34<sup>th</sup> centile) T2 Vaginal Breech 2502g (20<sup>th</sup> centile)

Booked in GGC at 28 weeks. Had antenatal care in Nigeria. BMI 31

### Risk Assessment:

Previous baby > 90th centile. Previous Multiple birth, previous premature birth less than 37 weeks, Sickle cell trait, BMI > 30, Diabetes (first degree relative)

Both should be recommended **Red pathway**, Shared care

# Intrapartum Case Studies

1

## Fatima Afzal

Triage at 40+5. Growth USS > 25th centile, LV normal, Current BMI 19.2

5cm, Intact membranes, UA 3:10. Fetal movement and observations normal. Discussed via Arabic Interpreter.

## CASE STUDIES



2

## Blessing Abioye

Triage at 39+5. Growth > 75th centile, LV normal, Current BMI 35.82  
Admitted to antenatal ward at 2cm, UA in-coordinate, Intact membranes.

Settled overnight after morphine, review on ward round: No change. Consented for Induction for long latent phase when space.

Due to workload, admitted to labour ward 5 hours later. On admission 6cm, Intact membranes, UA 3:10

Can should be recommended **Green pathway**, Midwife led care with intermittent auscultation

# Actions



Cultural safety education for staff

Updated antenatal and intrapartum guidelines

Engagement with women

Engagement with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups

Interpreting services

Information provision

# Outcomes

Intrapartum/ Birth	Minority Ethnicity	White British
CTG no indication	21.5% (< 50%)	13% (< 28%)
Fetal Scalp Electrode	9% (< 47%)	15.5% (> 0.6%)
Intrapartum Syntocinon	8.8% (< 2.2)	11.7% (> 69.5%)
Spontaneous Vaginal Birth	82.4% (< 5%)	75% (< 8%)
Unplanned Caesarean Births	4.5% (< 25%)	4.6% (< 8%)
PPH > 1000mls	13% (> 73%)	9.35% (> 6.3%)
Episiotomy	8.8% (< 47.9%)	6.7% (< 33%)
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Degree tear	9.25% (> 23.3%)	7.4% (> 1.3%)
Neonatal	Minority Ethnicity	White British
Neonatal Resuscitation	2.9% (< 49%)	4.8% (> 9%)
Low Cord PH	1.3% (< 64.8%)	1.2% (< 20%)
Neonatal Admissions	0% (< 100%)	0.8% (> 0.8%)

# Final Thought

Throughout the antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal period, we need to:

- consider the influence of an individual's cultural, social, political and religious beliefs
- gain knowledge and awareness and explore how this may impact the way women make decisions and respond to recommended treatment options
- Provide individualised, risk assessed, high-quality care with particular emphasis on reducing health inequalities (NMC, 2019)
- All women should be treated with dignity and receive care which is respectful of and supports their individual values and beliefs.
- Our professional standards are explicit, in that professionals have a duty and are accountable for providing unbiased, non-judgmental and safe care which promotes the health and wellbeing of all those in our care (NMC, 2018)

# Keep in touch

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