

ARIADNE: Working with People from Minority Ethnic Groups to Improve their Access to and Experience of Mental Health Care

Domenico Giacco, Associate Clinical Professor

Historically, people from minority ethnic groups have had worse experiences of mental health care than White British people. This may have caused the higher rates of coercive treatments in some minority ethnic groups. For example, it was estimated that the rates of detentions under the Mental Health Act are four times higher in Black people than in White people.

COVID-19 related mortality and morbidity and the economic downturn have very significantly affected vulnerable groups and deprived areas, also causing additional problems with accessing health care for mental health problems. We need urgent solutions to make sure that people from minority ethnic groups access care when they need it and have a positive experience of it. This would enable the NHS to provide treatments can be prompt and beneficial and to prevent mental health crises requiring coercive treatment.

To identify these solutions, the **ARIADNE project** (*AddResing the ImpAct of coviD-19 paNdEmic on the access to experience of mental health care of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups*) will work with mental health service users from minority ethnic groups, and their family members and professionals. This project is funded by the NIHR Policy Research Programme and led by Dr Domenico Giacco and Prof. Swaran Singh at the University of Warwick, who are also leads for the Mental Health theme of the NIHR ARC West Midlands.

This project is based on a methodology called experience-based co-design. It will involve these stakeholders in directly designing actions and service changes to improve access to and experience of mental health care for people from minority ethnic groups. The research will start from interviews with a large numbers of stakeholders and then involve some of them in group activities, i.e. focus groups to prioritise areas for intervention and series of workshops, to design the improvements in care together with senior NHS managers and leaders. We will work in four areas of England: Coventry and Warwickshire, East London, Sheffield and Greater Manchester.

The result of this co-production effort will be local and national actions to improve access and experience of mental health care of people from minority ethnic groups. This will be made possible by the presence of experts in behavioural and organisational change within our team. The will supervise the co-production process in order to enable the development of clear and achievable action plans for service improvement by end of the project, in May 2022.

The research activities are currently in progress and we would like to invite all interested mental health service users, carers and professionals in the NIHR ARC West Midlands consortium to contribute to the project.

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