

Seminar on understanding issues relating to ethnicity and pharmacy education and training

10 October 2016

Event report

Overview

Over 60 delegates attended our seminar in central London looking at issues related to ethnicity and pharmacy education and training on 10 October 2016. Delegates included representatives from schools of pharmacy, pre-registration pharmacist training providers, pharmacy students and equality and diversity organisations.

The aims of the seminar were:

- To present the results of our commissioned qualitative research on Black African performance
- For key stakeholders to identify some key issues and how they may address these

The qualitative research completed by OPM on behalf of the GPhC examined the factors that may influence the experiences and performance of Black-African candidates.

Plenary session

Nigel Clarke, Chair of the GPhC Council, welcomed delegates to the seminar and outlined that this was only the start of our work in this area and that this work was extremely important for the GPhC in understanding issues related to ethnicity and pharmacy education and training.

Nigel outlined the key driver for the GPhC in commissioning the research was our analysis of the results from previous years' registration assessment results which showed that candidates from BME groups, and particularly the Black African group, tended to perform less well than other candidates. He emphasised that the GPhC Council is committed to equality and fairness across everything the organisation does which is why the Council wanted to improve understanding of the potential reasons why this occurs.

Keynote address

Professor Uduak Archibong, Professor of Diversity from the University of Bradford, agreed that it was important to start the process of discussing disproportionality in assessment in both higher and professional education and training.

Professor Archibong gave a general overview of the impact of ethnicity in higher education. She described the development of understanding over the years with all research indicating that race is a factor in educational attainment and emphasised that no-one should shy away from this.

She outlined that many issues raised in the OPM research had been found in previous research including the impact of:

- Financial burdens - particularly for students from BME backgrounds where they may need to balance work and study
- Feelings of isolation and alienation –particularly for overseas students
- A distrust of the system – particularly from BME students.

She highlighted the three factors that need to be addressed to ensure equal performance for all:

- Individual factors
- Institutional cultures
- Organisational structures.

She emphasised that at an individual level, this means helping students to challenge expectations about them and valuing the wealth that they can bring due to their diversity.

At an institutional level, this involves looking at institutional cultures and organisational structures and for leaders to provide a vision and strategy for inclusion within their organisations.

Professor Archibong set out a framework for change, which emphasised the need for vision and leadership. She identified four critical success factors:

- Establish senior leaders and managers as sponsors and role models for inclusion
- Build a group of change agents ready to embed inclusive leadership
- Position inclusive practices as part of an organisational programme of change
- Create structural equality and 'de-bias' organisational practices and procedures.

Professor Archibong welcomed the GPhC's event for beginning a critical conversation about an issue that needed to be addressed, and called for leaders to work together to achieve success for everybody.

[View Professor Archibong's presentation slides here.](#)

Dr Helen Brown and Mr Tim Vanson, OPM

Dr Brown presented the findings from the qualitative research carried out by OPM into Black African candidate performance in the registration assessment. The qualitative research was gathered through interviews and focus groups with recently registered Black African and pre-registration trainee pharmacists. They were asked about their experiences at their School of Pharmacy, pre-registration training placement and their experience of the registration assessment.

Helen emphasised that although a number of issues were identified which could impact on Black-African trainees, many Black African trainee pharmacists are highly motivated, do not experience the disadvantaging factors the



report identified, and are very successful in their education and training.

For OPM one of the key issues that they found was the poor quality of some pre-registration placements.

A number of recommendations came out of the report, with some specific to Schools of Pharmacy, pre-registration training providers or the GPhC and some which would need to be addressed more widely by all pharmacy stakeholders.

You can read the finalised report here.

View OPM's presentation slides here.

Kirsty White, Assistant Director, General Medical Council

Kirsty White, Assistant Director, Education and Standards at the GMC explained the work the GMC is currently undertaking looking at the difference in attainment between different groups of trainee doctors.

She advised that the goal of this work was to enable fair training pathways for all, through ensuring:

- that any hurdles in the way of a doctor's progression (tests, assessments, selection criteria) are valid, fair and are justifiable in terms of necessary knowledge, skills, experience and expected standards of conduct
- that individuals wishing to enter and progress within the profession have opportunities to achieve their potential
- that evidence of actual or potential bias or unfair treatment is addressed.

An analysis of the GMC's data over several years highlighted a number of different factors linked to attainment, but overall had shown that differential attainment was clearly linked to ethnicity. Kirsty highlighted that the GMC's findings relating to differential attainment reflected what was seen in medical education in other countries and in higher education more generally.

One of the ways that the GMC has tried to address this is to consider how trainees can be better supported during their education and training. Kirsty explained that they had found that training environments and support structures can be barriers or can be protective processes in helping trainees, with tools such as individualised learning plans helping to address challenges that trainees may face.

She outlined that in order to understand the reasons why this was occurring they undertook some qualitative research. The qualitative research found that the most important aspect of training was the relationship trainees had with their supervisor. Secondly, the research also found that there was a perceived bias in recruitment. Thirdly, it also found that BME trainee doctors were less likely to get placements geographically close to home, which meant they were separated from their family and support networks.

She touched on the perceptions of support systems for trainee doctors and the need to highlight good support practices.

She outlined some challenges they have set out to their education and training providers, differentiating between the types of support that needs to be provided at an individual level and also at a systematic level.

Lastly she outlined how the GMC are using the findings of their research to drive changes to their education and training standards.

You can read more about the GMC's work in this area on the GMC website.

Workshop sessions

Nigel invited attendees to consider three questions posed by the GPhC and discuss these with others on their table.

Question 1: What have you and your organisation learnt from the measures you already have in place to support black and minority ethnic students and trainees?

The discussions on tables indicated that policies supporting Black African and minority ethnic students/trainees from education and training providers are not homogenised. Some organisations have more comprehensive policies to support students while others did not actively discuss these matters.

While discussing the policies they have in place within their respective organisations to support Black African and minority students, event attendees mentioned:

- The importance of supporting international students with **English and communication classes** as well as providing them with **support to adapt to a different learning culture**
- The positive impact of **mixing study groups** so that students would meet and interact with all students on their programmes
- The benefits of **mentoring schemes**, as peer mentoring, being reflected in students' grades
- The key **role of tutors** in supporting students/trainees and the need for tutors' training to provide specific advice around **supporting Black African and minority ethnic students/trainees**
- The importance of **role models** in term of student motivation
- How **anonymous recruitment** contributes to staff diversity
- How **anonymous marking and reporting systems** prevent unconscious bias

Question 2: Thinking about what you have heard, what issues does this raise for you/your organisation?

Event attendees expressed that the discussions and presentations triggered their thoughts and agreed that Black African students are often isolated as a minority in Schools of Pharmacy intakes.

They reflected on:

- The **need for action** to support specific ethnic groups, and not only Black African students/ trainees, as well as mature students
- Doing more work/reflection to build a greater understanding of **cultural differences**
- The need for **role models** from all ethnic groups and on how to improve staff diversity both at the university and in the community
- The different **learning strategies/cultures** used in different parts of the world and how to **support students to transition** to the ones used in Great Britain

- The kind of **equality and diversity training tutors were currently undertaking** and the need to incorporate cultural understanding in students/trainees' support
- The **design of assessment tools** in order to avoid to de-bias e.g. anonymous marking
- The importance of **mixing students' study groups** to help encourage students from different ethnic groups to work together
- The **kind of support universities could provide to trainees** once on their pre-registration training
- **The impact that disclosing data in relation to diversity in universities on league tables** could have
- The **need for monitoring students/trainees** early on, in order to put in place inclusive action based on these statistics

Question 3: What further actions could you and your organisation take in response to the issues raised?

In term of possible action to take back to their respective organisations, event attendees mentioned:

- **Going beyond EDI policies** in their processes and procedures
- **Widening EDI discussion to all university staff** in order to create organisational change
- Modifying **admission processes** to make them anonymous
- Providing **comprehensive information to future students** to explain to them what studying on an MPharm entails
- Proposing **transitional programmes**, involving language and communication classes as well as academic methodology, for international students to adapt to a new learning culture
- **Training of tutors** particularly focusing on supporting black and minority ethnic students
- Reviewing education and training providers' **leadership and role models** to improve diversity
- **Supporting students from ethnic groups during their pre-registration training**
- Improving the **collaboration between education and training providers** to improve the experience of students and trainees

Closing remarks and next steps:

Nigel thanked attendees for their contribution to the afternoon and stressed that there is a joint responsibility for all those involved in pharmacy education and training to ensure that it is as fair as possible for all students and trainees. In this regard, he explained that the GPhC will use its regulatory levers to help promote and achieve this and will use what had been heard to help shape the development of initial education and training standards and the methodology the GPhC uses to accredit courses. Nigel encouraged all delegates to consider what actions they could take forward and expressed the GPhC's commitment to working with everyone on this very important issue.

Appendix 1: List of delegates

First name	Surname	Organisation	Role
Isma	Ahmed	De Montfort University	Student
Noma	Al-Ahmad	Propharmace	Managing Director
Buge	Apampa	University of Sussex	Director of Pharmacy
Olutayo	Arikawe	YPG Project LTD	Superintendent Pharmacist
Diane	Ashiru-Oredope	Public Health England	Pharmacist Lead, Health Protection
Karen	Ball	University of Portsmouth	Associate Head Education
Aishnine	Benjamin	Nursing and Midwifery Council	Equality and Diversity Policy Manager
Helen	Bradbury	NHS (Yorkshire and the Humber) and Leeds Uni Pre-reg Manager	Professional Lead for Pharmacy
John	Brazier	University of Reading	Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Chemistry
Lawrencia Louise	Brown	UCL School of Pharmacy	Principal Teaching Fellow in Pharmacy Practice
Deryck	Browne	African Health Policy Network	Policy Officer
Nadia	Bukhari	University College London	Senior Teaching Fellow in Pharmacy Practice & Pre-Reg Co-ordinator
Christine	Burbage	Superdrug	Pharmacy Superintendent
Rosalynne	Cheeseman	Health Education England	Education Policy Manager
Iain	Cumming	Medway School of Pharmacy, Universities of Kent and Greenwich	Head of Pharmacy School
Nathalie	Ebot-Arrey	University of Brighton	Student
Gail	Fleming	Health Education England	Professional Advisor, Pharmacist Education and Training Reform , Health
Getrude	Fundira	Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital - BCUHB West	Pre-reg pharmacist
Rebecca	Green	University of Reading	Head of Pharmacy School
Katie	Greenwood	University of Huddersfield	Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy

			Practice
Jason	Hall	University of Manchester	Director of UG Teaching
Neil	Henney	Liverpool John Moores University	Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology
Helen	Hull	University of Portsmouth	Pre-registration Training Manager
Peter	Hylands	King's College London	Head of Pharmacy School
Osenadia	Joseph-Ebare		Student
Hershel	Joshi	University of Lincoln	Clinical pharmacist Teacher practitioner
Khalid	Khan	Allied Pharmacies	Pre-registration Co-ordinator
Ivana	Knyght	Royal Pharmaceutical Society	Faculty Professional Support Pharmacist
Alison	Lansley	University of Brighton	MPharm Course Leader
Jayne	Lawrence	Royal Pharmaceutical Society/King's College London	Chief Scientist/Professor
Kelly	Lefteri	University of Hertfordshire	Head of Pharmacy Practice
Natalie	Lewis	Aston University	Clinical Teaching Fellow
Kate	Livesey	Pharmacy Voice	Policy Adviser
Katie	Maddock	Keele University	Director of MPharm Studies
Akwasi	Mintah	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Student
Tracy	Ndungu		Student
Tase	Oputu	Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	Deputy Chief Pharmacist
Amit	Parekh	British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (BPSA)	President
Mehendra	Patel	University of Huddersfield	Principal Enterprise Fellow and Academic leader in Pharmacy
Katie	Petty-Saphon	Pharmacy Schools Council	Executive Director
Indra	Pooran	Black Training and Enterprise Group	Programme Director
Charareh	Pourzand	University of Bath	Senior Lecturer in Pharmaceutics /

			Equality and Diversity Coordinator
Susan	Pyne	University of Strathclyde	Director of Equality and Diversity
Tim	Rendell	Day Lewis (Chemists) Ltd	Head of Pharmacy
Aamer	Safdar	Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	Principal Pharmacist Lead for Education and Development
Peter	Seville	University of Central Lancashire	Head of Pharmacy School
Paulette	Storey	Pharmacist Support	Head of Operations
Pardis	Tabaee	University	Research/Pharmacist
Luke	Taylor	University of Kent	Student Success (EDI) Officer - Researcher
Emmanuella	Torto-Doku	University of Brighton	Student
Matthew	Traynor	University of Hertfordshire	Head of Department
Nicola	Tyers	The Pharmacy Training Company	Director
Susannah	Walsh	De Montfort University	Principal Lecturer/ Admissions tutor