

# Postnatal Depression Community Session: 20 June, 2023

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## Background

The National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) currently funds 20 Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs) across England. These are collaborations between world-leading universities and NHS organisations that bring together academics and clinicians to translate lab-based scientific breakthroughs into potential new treatments, diagnostics, and medical technologies. The Imperial BRC is a collaboration between Imperial College, London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT) and is currently funded until November 2027. It has 14 research themes, four of which are cross cutting.

The Imperial Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC) is a core facility of the Imperial BRC undertaking research on research and supporting Imperial BRC researchers to undertake public involvement and engagement in research. PERC recognises that involving a diverse range of patients and members of the public in research is essential for ensuring that research is relevant, meaningful, and useful for improving healthcare experiences and outcomes for all. PERC is seeking to establish relationships with under-represented and under-served communities in North West London to engage a more diverse range of patients and members of the public in research. By working closely with these communities, PERC seeks to ensure that research is tailored to their specific needs and priorities, and that their voices are heard in healthcare decision-making.

### Approach and purpose

Since mid-2021 and as part of its ongoing efforts to engage under-served communities in healthcare research PERC has been working to establish a relationship with the Somali community in Hounslow. Through discussions with Khadra Badal, a Hounslow community leader, PERC was able to identify several areas of health that were priorities for her Somali community in Hounslow. These included health literacy sessions on topics such as diabetes, autism, ADHD, mental health, and cancer. In response, PERC organised an initial health literacy session on autism, which was well-received by the community. This was followed by a session on diet and nutrition for children and adults, which further strengthened the relationship between PERC and the community.

Through coordinating the autism session, a connection was established with Dr. Jamilia Carey, a Consultant Psychiatrist from West London Perinatal Services. Recognising a collective interest within the community to explore maternal mental health experiences, a session was designed in collaboration with the West London Perinatal Services team and community leader Khadar Badal.

A dedicated session on Postnatal Depression was organised, featuring the expertise of Perinatal Psychiatrist Wala Salman and Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Social Worker Althea Rowe. The session was conducted in English and subsequently translated into Somali by Ubah, a proficient Somali translator. This linguistic consideration was essential to ensure that the session resonated with and was accessible to all members of the community in attendance.

### Event overview and agenda

The event took place on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, from 10 am to 12 pm at Al-Furqan Education Trust, a community hub widely utilised by members of the Hounslow Somali

community. The session encompassed various topics, including Baby Blues, Postpartum Depression, Anxiety, and Postpartum Psychosis. An interactive discussion also took place on myths versus facts.

The session proved highly engaging, fostering a space where individuals felt comfortable sharing their lived experiences. Specialists not only listened attentively but also actively discussed the available support. During the Q&A session, community members were notably involved, not only posing questions but also openly sharing their experiences with postnatal depression. The discussions were conducted in both English and Somali, skilfully facilitated by Ubah, the Somali translator. Language accessibility, illustrated through a presentation that was translated in English and Somali, was highlighted as a key facilitator of understanding. The session included a Q&A segment where personal stories were shared, fostering an environment of openness.

After the sessions, attendees were invited to share their feedback about the session and specify research areas they would like to explore further (see the feedback form in **Appendix 2**, and results in the **Appendix 3**).

Culturally appropriate refreshments and hot drinks were offered during the session and were catered for by a member of the community.

#### Attendee recruitment

A total of 37 women attended the session (demographics of those who provided these are set out at **Appendix 4**). To ensure that the event was widely advertised and accessible to community members in North -West London, a diverse range of strategies were utilised. Flyers in both English and Somali languages (**Appendix 1**) were created and posted in local schools, the Mosque where the session was held, and various locations within the Hounslow area. An e-flyer was also shared on social media platforms, and the community's WhatsApp group and Facebook page were utilized to disseminate the event details and flyers.

Furthermore, as the Somali community is a verbal community and word-of-mouth was used to share the event information. Community leaders spoke with community members in person at community events, local shops, and the Mosque. The event was announced during Friday prayers at the Mosque to reach a wider audience. These efforts to use multiple modes of communication were successful in raising awareness of the event and generating interest among the community in Hounslow and other parts of West London.

## Outcome of Event

### Feedback on the event

32/37 attendees at the post-natal depression session filled out the feedback form (**Appendix 2**). The event received predominantly “Excellent” ratings, and word-of-mouth was the preferred method for sharing information learned at the session. Healthcare topics of interest for future sessions were varied (top 10 listed below), with Autism being the most frequently mentioned (see **Appendix 3** for detailed insights).

1. Autism

2. ADHD
3. Fasting/ Diet
4. Skin conditions (i.e Eczema)
5. Lactose Intolerance
6. Depression
7. Menopause
8. Mental Health
9. Fibromyalgia
10. Stroke

A significant outcome of the session was the unanimous expression of an increased likelihood to seek help or encourage friends to seek help for post-natal depression by all 32 respondents who completed the feedback form, constituting 100% positive feedback to the question *“following this session are you more likely to ask for help or encourage a friend to ask for help?”*

### Insights gathered

#### Baby blues and postpartum depression

In the discussion, attendees delved into the nuanced experiences surrounding postpartum mental health, distinguishing between baby blues and postpartum depression. Baby blues, affecting 50-80% of women, emerges shortly after birth, manifesting in rapid emotional shifts. Postpartum depression, on the other hand, extends beyond day 10, bringing enduring challenges such as persistent low mood, loss of interest, guilt, worthlessness, and disrupted sleep. Parenthood challenges, particularly related to sleep, were acknowledged as inherent but emphasized the importance of monitoring closely for signs of distress. The potential impact of mental health issues on family dynamics, particularly within marriages, was explored.

#### Anxiety

Anxiety was another prevalent theme, with attendees sharing exhaustive thoughts about potential harm to their newborns. Postpartum psychosis, characterised by low mood, unclear thinking, and personality changes, was explored as a distinct concern.

#### Intersectionality

The intersectionality of being Black, female, and Muslim adds complexity to mental health experiences. Attendees discussed unique challenges within the context of their cultural, religious, and gender identities.

#### Myths

A myth vs. fact activity debunked misconceptions, emphasising the importance of dismantling assumptions about maternal happiness after childbirth. Addressing the fear of losing custody, especially within minority communities, emerged as a crucial aspect.

#### Cultural values

The session also explored the significance of motherhood in Islam and the Somali community, stressing the need to align mental health discussions with cultural values.

Attitudes towards therapy were openly discussed, encouraging attendees to overcome stigmas associated with seeking professional help.

#### Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Looking ahead, attendees expressed interest in a future workshop on PTSD and suggested involving a religious leader to explore the intersection between Islam and mental health care. Religion, in this context, was seen as a potential conduit for mental health support within the community.

#### How community insight and feedback will be used

The insights gained from the event hold significant implications across multiple domains:

##### Informing Research Questions in the Imperial BRC:

The experiences and concerns shared by the Somali community serve as invaluable inputs for formulating pertinent research questions within research being conducted at the Imperial BRC Pregnancy & Prematurity theme. This ensures that research endeavours align with and address the specific needs of the community, such as some of the work being done by Dr Tanweer Beleil, an Imperial BRC researcher, looking at health disparities in maternal health in minoritised communities.

##### Evidencing Public Priorities in Funding Applications:

The insights gathered from the session provide concrete evidence of public priorities, particularly those expressed by the Somali community. This evidence can be strategically integrated into funding applications, strengthening the case for financial support for initiatives that directly address community needs. These initiatives include better understanding mental health disorders with respect to the heterogeneity of signs and symptoms, disease progression, and the mental health services available in the borough of Hounslow, as well as local authorities.

##### Informing Engagement Strategies for West London Perinatal Services:

Understanding the perspectives and preferences of the community will guide West London Perinatal Services in tailoring engagement strategies. This involves aligning services with community expectations and employing culturally sensitive approaches to enhance participation.

##### Informing Engagement Strategies for [Hounslow Perinatal Services]:

Tereza Ledlova, an Advanced Social Work Practitioner from Families First and Intensive Support, Children's, Health and Adults' Services, also attended and played a crucial role during the session. Attendees benefited from her expertise as she addressed questions about the care and support services available in the Hounslow borough, offering insights into how to access support and navigate different care pathways. Following the session, Tereza actively engaged with the community's concerns and took these discussions back to her workplace. This collaborative effort aims to address the specific needs of the community and share the valuable insights gained during the session to enhance the support provided. The event's outcomes also reflect a commitment to collaborative initiatives.

Tereza Ledlove's role in taking back insights to her team to collaborate with the Somali community underscore a commitment to adjusting services based on community feedback.

Children Centres, equipped with a Somali practitioner, are open to close collaboration, exploring partnerships with community initiatives and considering sessions in mosques. The positive reception of adapting services based on community needs highlights a proactive approach from the managers. The event's insights are recognized for their importance in identifying service gaps for effective support. Feedback received will inform the development of targeted support for mothers in the Somali community, and consideration is underway for facilitating collaboration between Children Centres' managers and community representatives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the insights gained translate into meaningful actions across research, funding, service delivery, and community engagement initiatives.

#### Planning Future Events:

The insights gained serve as a further resource for planning future events that resonate better with the needs and preferences of the Somali community. This encompasses structuring sessions, selecting topics, and engaging speakers in ways that deeply connect with the community.



Appendix 1: Posters

Post-natal depression poster in English

**Want to know more about postnatal depression?**

**Join our experts from the Perinatal Mental Health Service and Social Services.**

**When:** Tuesday 20th June 2023  
10am to 12.00pm

**Who for:** All

**Venue:** Alfurqan Education Trust  
33-41 Cross Lances Road  
Hounslow  
TW3 2AD


 **Coffee and tea provided**

 **Any questions:**  
Contact Khadra Badal at 07948337192



**Are you struggling with postnatal depression? Do you know some one struggling with postnatal depression? Join us and learn more about the support available**

Organised by: UK Women Network  
In collaboration with:

Post-natal depression poster in Somali

**Ma rabtaa inaad wax badan ka ogaato Murugada dhalmada ka dib?**

**Waxaa nagu soo biiray La-taliyaha Dhakhaatiirta Maskaxda ee dhalmada iyo shaqaalaha bulshada**

**Wakhtiga::** Tuesday 20th June 2023  
10am to 12.00pm

**Waxaa loogu talagalay:**  
Waalidiinta/daryeelayaasha Soomaalida

**Goobta:** Alfurqan Education Trust  
33-41 Cross Lances Road  
Hounslow  
TW3 2AD

 **Nala Wadaag Quraac fudud**

 **Wixii su'aalo ah:**  
La xidhiidh Khadra Badal at 07948337192



**Ma adiga ama qof aad taqaan ayaa la halgamaya Murugada dhalmada ka dib? Nagu soo biir oo baro wax badan oo ku saabsan taageerada la heli karo.**



Appendix 2: Feedback form

Imperial College London

**FEEDBACK FORM**  
**Postnatal Depression Session**  
**20th June 2023**



Prefer to provide your feedback online?  
Scan above

Please complete the questions below or scan the QR code to access the online feedback form

1. How would you rate your experience at this event? (please circle)

Very bad
  Bad
  Average
  Good
  Excellent

2. If you were to share the information from today's session with family/friends, how would you do this? (please tick all that apply)

Whatsapp
  Facebook
  Instagram
  Word-of-mouth
  Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. What other healthcare topics would you like to hear about at future sessions?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Following this session, are you more likely to ask for help or encourage a friend to ask for help?

Yes 
 No 
 Not sure

**I am also happy to share my...**

age...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
ethnicity...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
gender...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
postcode... (first section only)	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>

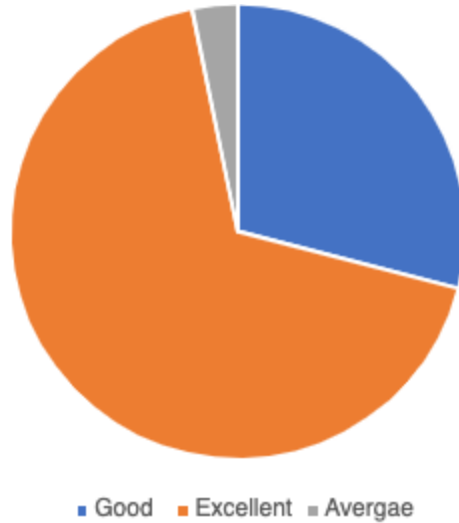
Interested in hearing about future opportunities to hear about healthcare topics? Ask us how!

### Appendix 3: Attendee feedback

The session was attended by 37 members of the public of which 32 completed feedback forms (N=32).

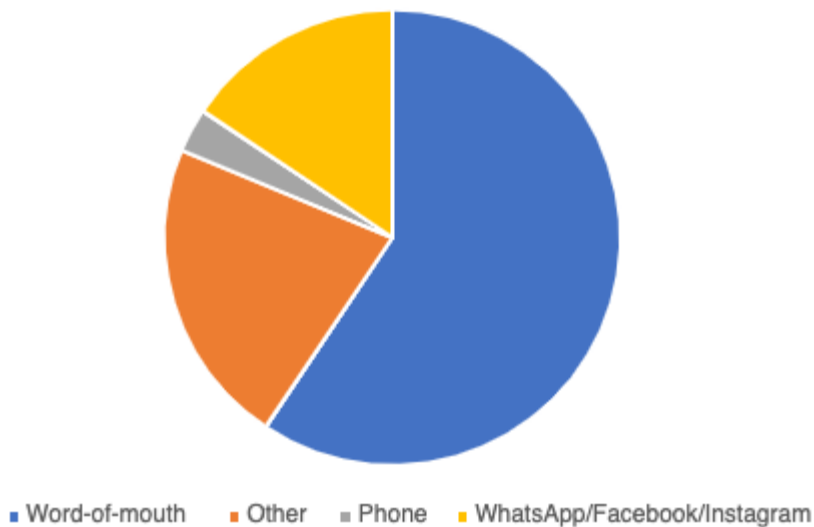
#### How would you rate your experience at this event?

Out of the 32 feedback forms returned, 67% (n=22/32) rated the event as "Excellent," while 28% (n=9/32) rated it as "Good," and 3% (n=1/32) rated the event as "Average".



#### If you were to share the information from today's session with family/friends, how would you do this?

Out of the 32 feedback forms returned, 59% (n=19/32) stated they would share information from the session via "Word-of-mouth", while 16% (n=5/32) preferred to use "WhatsApp/Facebook/Instagram". Additionally, 22% (n=7/32) cited "Other" methods for dissemination, and 3% (n=1/32) selected "Phone" as their preferred means of sharing.



What other healthcare topics would you like to hear about at future sessions?

**Diabetes**

- Diabetes and endometriosis
- Diabetes and cardiovascular problems

**Autism**

- Autism and nutrition
- Autism and depression
- Autism and insomnia

**Mental Health**

- Depression
- Mental health care pathways
- Mental health for children

**Women's health**

- Menopause
- Postpartum Health
- Postnatal body health
- Parenting beyond childhood

**Other topics**

- Digestive health
- Down syndrome
- Vitamins/supplements for children
- Lactose intolerance
- Allergies
- Breast Cancer
- Ovarian Cancer
- Memory loss and dementia
- Stroke
- Arthritis

## Appendix 4: Attendee demographics

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics provided in feedback forms (N=32)**

	n(%)
<b>Age (in years)</b>	
Mean (range)	36
<b>Age groups (in years)</b>	
20-29	1(2%)
30-39	12(38%)
40-49 (43%)	13 (41%)
Prefer not to say	6 (19%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	32 (100%)
Prefer not to say	0
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
Black African	5 (16%)
Somali	17 (53%)
Mixed race	1 (3%)
Pakistani	1 (3%)
<b>Postcode (first section only)</b>	
TW7	5
TW14	3
UBH	4
TW3	9
TW8	3
TW15	1
TW4	1
TW19	1
TW5	1