

Invitation to Contribute to:

Integrating attention to ethnicity and migration within public health research

Background and rationale

The ethnic diversity of the English population continues to grow. Public health evidence and practice should reflect the needs of this diverse population. However, to date, ethnicity and migration remain marginalised concerns, even within the health inequalities agenda in England. This project, funded by the NIHR School for Public Health Research (<http://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/>) will help public health practitioners, researchers and policy makers focus more attention on these overlooked dimensions within applied public health research.

While the collective terms 'migrant' and 'minority ethnic' conceal great heterogeneity, there are important differences in many health and healthcare indicators by ethnicity and migration status. Poor health relates both to the concentration of socioeconomic disadvantage and to discrimination and exclusion. Low levels of 'cultural competence' and institutional racism within services contribute to low uptake, negative experiences and poor outcomes. Cultural and genetic factors can also contribute to health differences between particular ethnic groups, factors that often remain poorly understood and inconsistently addressed. The failure to explicitly recognise the complex dimensions of ethnic identity and migration status within much public health research and practice hampers effective action on inequality.

Past work suggests that this marginalisation is linked to at least three inter-related factors. First, researchers and evidence users lack confidence to engage with this conceptually challenging and politically contentious area. Second, there are some significant data limitations and missed opportunities to generate knowledge. Third, the demand for evidence has been inconsistent among policy-makers and commissioners. However, there are signs that this situation is changing with renewed attention to the health needs of established minority communities, as well as those of new arrivals, evident at both national and local levels.

Objectives

A team of researchers drawn from the University members of the School for Public Health Research (SPHR) will, in relation to migration status, ethnicity and health in England:

- Identify data availability, gaps & routes to enhancing data collection and use
- Assess current understanding of, gaps, and responses to, health needs and inequalities
- Identify local & national public health priorities and examples of promising practice
- Identify research & evaluation capacity development needs
- Build engagement across research, policy, practice and the public on the core issues, opportunities and challenges in integrating attention to ethnicity and migration in public health research

Activities

- 1. Review of Local Authority needs assessment and policy documents** to assess whether and how these strategic documents: present data; analyse need; generate understanding; and identify action.
- 2. Stakeholder consultations** with local, regional and national public health practitioners and members of the public to explore: data sources; current understanding of health needs; priority public health issues for which evidence to inform action is lacking; promising local practice; capacity development needs; broader initiatives that have potential to impact on migrant and/or minority ethnic health.
- 3. Review of national level policy documents on migrant and minority ethnic health** to identify key policy concerns and (in)consistency with issues identified by other stakeholders.
- 4. Review of quantitative data sources and opportunities for enhancement** to identify key sources of quantitative data on migration, ethnicity and health-related outcomes and their potential to support applied public health research at local, regional and national levels.
- 5. Preparation of follow-on research proposals** on priority topics for submission for funding

Outputs

- List of priority research questions
- One or more funding proposals
- Two briefing papers with recommendations to local and national decision-makers
- New collaborative networks across research, policy/practice and public

How you can get involved

- **Stakeholder interviews:** We are looking for people working in Local Authorities, community-based organisations and members of the public to share their perspectives. The time commitment for doing so would be between 40 and 60 minutes in either telephone, face to face or group interview between October and December 2017.
- **Project Advisory Group:** This group will meet by teleconference three times during the project to ensure relevance and links to networks for increased impact.
- **National Expert Workshop** on data availability and analysis. To be held April 2018.
- **Public Engagement Group:** A group of 15-20 members of the public with diverse migration and ethnic backgrounds. We will hold a series of quarterly local (face-to-face) and national (via teleconferencing) consultative meetings to seek input to the project.
- **Email distribution list:** You can join our distribution list to receive regular updates
- **Website:** You can follow updates via our website <http://scharr.dept.shef.ac.uk/sphr/>

Please get in touch via [this form](#) to say how you'd like to be involved

Project lead: Sarah Salway, University of Sheffield s.salway@sheffield.ac.uk, 07976625394

Team members: Lois Orton, (University of Liverpool); Maria Zubair, Liz Such (University of Sheffield); Clare Bamba, Vicki McGowan (University of Newcastle); Louise Lafortune, Caroline Lee (University of Cambridge); Matt Egan, Sarah Milton (LSHTM); Yoav Ben-Shlomo (University of Bristol), Sonia Saxena (Imperial).