

MEDICINE

Racism in healthcare

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Gynecology

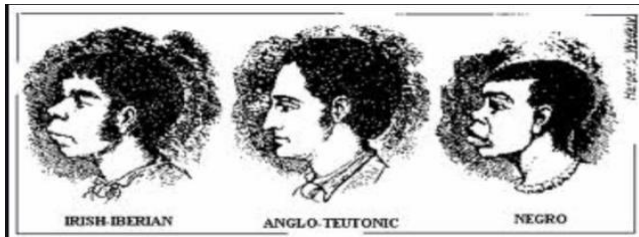
The NHS and Institutional racism

- Covid-19, the GMC



THE PROBLEMS:

- As of March 2019, over 1.2 million people were employed by the NHS. 1 out of 5 (20.7%) were from all other ethnic minorities and 4 out of 5 were from white ethnic minorities.
- The wage gap: White consultants will earn 4.9% more than their Black colleagues.
- Percentage of Black, Asian and other Ethnic minorities on NHS trust board members
- 58.4% felt they were treated as inferior because of their race (*Unison's race for equality campaign, 2019*)
- 36.7% of staff dealt with racist or xenophobic comments, abuse or name calling. (*Unison's race for equality campaign, 2019*)



RACE SCIENCE

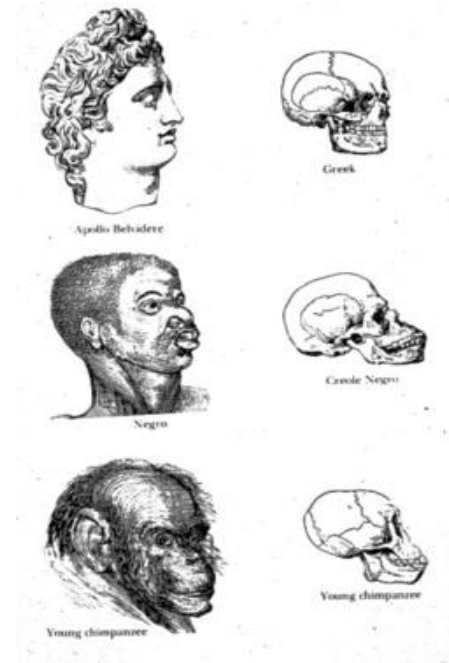
WHY ARE BLACK PEOPLE GIVEN DIFFERENT MEDICATION FOR HYPERTENSION?

The salt hypothesis:

Harvard university professor and economist, Roland Fryer saw this image and popularised the theory of the 'Salt hypertension' theory.

He explained that the English slave trader wanted to taste the sweat of the man to see how salty it tasted. The more salt he had in his body the better equipped he'd be to handle the sea voyage.

Today, many believe that African people hold more salt in their bodies due to the slave trade. Not because of their diet or increased stressors but because they have become genetically different with time.



Clinical trials

In the early 1980s, a trial found that a combination of two drugs were more beneficial in treating heart disease VS using the drugs separately. A drug company combined these and BiDil was produced.

In the late 1980s trial 2 found that an ACE-i drug was better than BiDil.

Over a decade later, the trial results were analysed once more and it was found that Black people did better on BiDil and ACE-i together whilst White people did just as well without BiDil.

By grouping these findings by race, they were able to demonstrate a need for Black people alone to be trialed with a larger sample size than before.

Upon completing the trial, the FDA approved the drug for market use in 2005 to treat heart disease in Black people.

“ No matter how open-minded, socially conscious, anti-racist I think I am, I still have old, learned hidden biases that I need to examine.

It is my responsibility to check myself daily for my stereotypes, prejudice and, ultimately, discrimination. ”

@SHES_MIGHTYMIGHTY

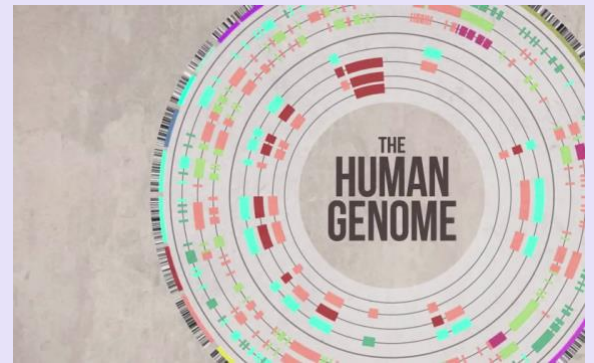
HYPERTENSION

- Caused by diet, reduced exercise and stress.
- Treated with several types of anti-hypertension drugs and causes 13% of deaths globally.
- In the UK, Black people are 2x more likely to develop hypertension compared to White people.
- In the UK, doctors prescribe a different type of drug depending on presumed ancestry of the patient: if you're Black you get a CCB (Calcium channel blocker) and if you're White/non-Black you'll get an ACE-i (ace inhibitor).

SOCIAL BELIEFS

In 1795, German physician Dr Blumenbach categorized people into 5 categories: Caucasians, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans and Malays. He deemed the Caucasian group as the most superior.

In his definition, Caucasians were the most beautiful and original race as well as being descendants of Adam and Eve.



The Human Genome Project

In 2009 the medical field were excited to understand the genetic basis for diseases like schizophrenia (particularly amongst Jewish and Black people) as well as hypertension and dementia.

No tangible genetic differences were found to help science get to the root of the Black people being disproportionately affected by these illnesses.

Could chronic exposure to discrimination account for some of these differences?

The exploitation of Black people in science:

- The case of Henrietta Lacks
- The Tuskegee Syphilis experiment
- J Marion Sims and live experiments of slaves Lucy, Anarcha and Betsy
- Samuel A Cartwright
- Sarah Baartman

POPULATION STUDIES

Important because they show Africans to have the lowest levels of hypertension in the world, interestingly they also demonstrate that when African people migrate to countries such as the UK they inherit hypertension at a significant rate.

Also, it has been shown that Europeans in Germany, Russia and Finland have the highest levels of hypertension.

GYNAECOLOGY

Black women have a higher chance of miscarriage with spontaneous and IVF pregnancies (*Dhillon Et Al. 2015 reproductive biomedicine online*)

55% of pregnant women admitted with Covid-19 were from Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities. 13% of the UK identify as Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities. Illustrating how Black women are disproportionately affected. (*UK obstetric surveillance system UKOSS*)

Black women are twice as likely to have a stillborn than their White counterparts (*Muglu et al. 2019 PLOS medicine*)

Higher rates of non-attendance to cervical screening from non-White backgrounds (*Marlow Et Al. 2015 British journal of cancer*)

Endometriosis is thought to be a 'White womans' disease, consequently leading to misdiagnosed patient and wrong treatment (*Bougie et al. 2019 American journal of Obstetrics and gynecology*)



**The very serious function
of racism is distraction.
It keeps you from doing
your work. It keeps you
explaining, over and
over again, your reason
for being.**

|
Toni Morrison

GH

Resources:

A handbook of clinical signs in Black and Brown skin Mukwende M, Tamony P, Turner M

Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups, Public health England

Black and Blue by John Hoberman. Highlighting the original and consequences of medical racism.

THE NHS AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The racial pay gap in the NHS is about the ability to access a higher position (*Source NHS pay gap reports 2019*):

For every £1 a Black female doctor earns, a White female doctor earns £1.19 and a White male doctor makes £1.38.

Black women are 5x more likely to die in childbirth than white women. Stereotypically, black women are seen as 'hysterical' and their concerns are not legitimized by healthcare professionals in the same way their white counterparts are validated.

Studies show that Black children are seen to be older, men are viewed to be stronger and more resilient as well as sickle cell patients being dismissed and seen to be opioid seeking. These assumptions kill, healthcare professionals need to act against learn biases and subjective judgements. Language barriers should be overcome with translators or trusted family members. (*Source: MBRRACE-UK report 19*)

COVID-19

95% of doctors who died in the first month of Lockdown due to covid-19 were Black and Asian. Oversimplified theories about Vitamin D deficiency and socio-economic factors were linked to a disproportionate amount of deaths.

There is no credible evidence to suggest that Vitamin D is a significant risk factor. If socio-economic factors were significant then why would 95% of Black and Asian doctors be dying if their access to health education provides them with extra knowledge? If proximity to sick patients was an issue, deaths amongst ITU and A&E clinicians would've been observed in the first month. Which staff groups is the NHS not protecting and why?

(*Source: HSJ April 2020, article: deaths of NHS staff from Covid-19 analysed.*)

Doctor, why do you say that the NHS is institutionally racist?

Because the facts says so.

THE GMC

The GMC fair to refer report shows that systematically, ethnic minority doctors are more likely to be reported to formal proceedings without an opportunity for informal feedback. Black, Asian and other Ethnic minorities are reported to the GMC more than twice the rate as White doctors. (*Source: GMC Fair to Refer Report*)

Doctors Mr David Sellu & Dr Hadiza Bawa-Garba are the only two doctors in the UK who have been charged with manslaughter. Both doctors were Black and had impeccable records. Since, they have both been cleared and reinstated to the medical register.

Credit:

Dr Amile Inusa (MBChB MSc)

Dr Anita Mitra, Gynaecologist

