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Exploring communication in antenatal care for Black pregnant women

Submission date
25/06/2024

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
27/06/2024

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
09/07/2026

Condition category
Pregnancy and Childbirth

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Research has shown there to be racial disparity in maternal health outcomes and experiences of maternity care. When asked about their experiences of maternity care, Black women frequently talk about good communication as connected to positive experiences and failures of communication as connected to poor experiences. This research aims to explore the relationship between communication, experience, and outcome for Black women receiving midwifery antenatal care. It is hoped that the findings of this study can be used to develop midwifery training materials and to make policy recommendations targeting improvement in outcomes and experiences for Black pregnant people.

Who can participate?
White midwives are eligible to participate if they deliver antenatal care at a participating site. Black pregnant women or birthing people can participate by invitation only if they are receiving antenatal care at a participating site with a participating midwife.

What does the study involve?
The study aims to video or audio record 20-30 antenatal appointments between Black pregnant women and their white midwives. These recordings will then be transcribed for conversation analysis. This method looks at how and when things are said and how actions are completed, by studying small details of the interaction such as choice of words, pauses, tone, and body movements. Pregnant women participants will also be asked to complete a short exit questionnaire after their appointment and to take part in a follow-up interview with the research team. The questionnaire and interview will ask about the participants' experience of communication in the appointment.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
There are no personal benefits for participants taking part in the study. However, participation will contribute to the creation of knowledge which aims to improve the training of midwives and the experiences and outcomes of expectant Black mothers.

Risks to participating are low and where they exist, efforts have been made to minimise these.

Every effort will be made to ensure the anonymity of research participants. Transcribed data will be fully anonymised. Clips of video or audio recordings used for dissemination or training purposes will have names and other identifying information removed and replaced with pseudonyms or blanks. Voices will be distorted to make them unrecognisable. Video footage will be made to look like a sketch drawing and the faces of participants will be blurred.

Should participants feel uncomfortable or anxious about participation during the appointment, or follow-up interview, they can ask for the recording to be stopped, and anything recorded to that point will be deleted.

Disruption to the appointment will be minimised by the use of small, unobtrusive recorders, operated by the midwife. The research team will not be in the room.

Where is the study run from?
The University of Ulster

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
December 2021 to June 2025

Who is funding the study?
The study is being undertaken as a PhD funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council via the Northern Bridge Consortium Doctoral Training Programme, with match funding from the Department of Economy, Northern Ireland

Who is the main contact?
Catherine Turner (PhD researcher), turner-c19@ulster.ac.uk

Contact information

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Public, Scientific

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Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
329792

Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS)
61928

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Grant Code
AH/R012415/1

Study information

Scientific Title
Exploring the relationship between communication, experience and outcome for Black pregnant women receiving midwifery antenatal care: a conversation analytic study.

Study objectives
The study is a conversation analytic project. This is a data-driven, qualitative and observational methodology, and as such does not have a study hypothesis.

The objectives of the study are as follows:
Primary research objective
To use conversation analysis to inductively explore the relationship between communication, experience and outcome for Black women receiving midwifery antenatal care.

Secondary research objectives
1. To conduct micro-analyses of interactional practices observed in antenatal appointments, for example, practices related to information exchange, decision-making, listening and membership categorisation.
2. To contextualise observational findings within self-report data designed to capture pregnant women's subjective experience of antenatal appointments.
3. To provide bottom-up, interactional data for use in midwifery training materials.
4. To make policy recommendations regarding communication practice in UK maternity services and the care of minority ethnic women in UK maternity services.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 12/06/2024, HSC REC A (Office for Research Ethics Committees Northern Ireland (ORECNI), Business Services Organisation, Unit 4, Lissue Industrial Estate West, Rathdown Walk, Moira Road, Lisburn, BT28 2RF, United Kingdom; +44 (0)28 95 361400; RECA@hscni.net), ref: 24/NI/0051

Primary study design
Observational

Study design
Observational qualitative study

Study type(s)
Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
The relationship between communication, experience and outcome for Black women receiving midwifery antenatal care

Interventions
The research design will combine a detailed analysis of the language used in antenatal appointments between Black pregnant women and white midwives, with a complementary analysis of the pregnant women participants' subjective experiences of this communication and their satisfaction with any decisions made during the appointment.

Data collection 1 – Observational data
The research team aim to video or audio record 20-30 antenatal appointments between Black pregnant women and white midwives collecting observational data for conversation analysis. Audio-visual recording is preferable to capture non-verbal communication, which is known to be a commonly used channel for affective behaviours or displaying emotion. However, pregnant women who do not wish to consent to audio-visual recording could consent to audio-only recording as an alternative. Midwives will not have the option to consent to audio-only recordings, as this would preclude any pregnant women participants in their care from selecting to be video-recorded

Data collection 2 – Short questionnaire

Immediately post appointment, pregnant women participants will be asked to complete a short (maximum 15-question) Likert scale questionnaire probing their experience of communication, wider experience, assessment of outcomes, and assessment of the salience of the race of either midwife or pregnant woman during the appointment. Completing this is expected to take between 2 and 8 minutes.

Data collection 3 – Semi-structured qualitative interviews

After a period of a minimum of 24 hours following the appointment, pregnant women participants who have consented will take part in a qualitative interview. This will allow for a period of reflection and may uncover different subjective truths to those captured in the contemporaneous data. The interviews will probe the same subject areas as the short

questionnaire but be semi-structured to allow space for participants to explore their independent thoughts and observations in recognition that the interview itself can be an opportunity for reflexivity.

Partial consent

While it is preferred that participating pregnant women consent to all three data collection streams, it will be possible to consent to the recording of the antenatal appointment only. This will help minimise the burden on women while collecting sufficient data to build collections of linguistic phenomena for conversation analysis. It is considered that a complementary analysis of these phenomena can be conducted using data from only some of the participants.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Specific interactional phenomena of analytic interest will be measured using conversation analysis of the data from interactional practices related to information exchange, decision-making, listening or membership categorisation at one timepoint

Key secondary outcome(s)
Women's subjective experience of communication in their antenatal appointment will be measured via a non-validated exit questionnaire and follow-up semi-structured qualitative interview at one timepoint

Completion date
23/07/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
This research has two distinct participant groups with two different inclusion criteria.

Pregnant people participants:
1. Black pregnant women or birthing people receiving antenatal care at a participating site with a participating midwife
2. Black identity will be determined by self-identification as any of the following racially characterised ethnicities on their NHS ethnicity data, as indicated on their consent form: Black or Black British - African, Black, or Black British - Caribbean, Black or Black British – Any other Black background, Mixed - White and Black Caribbean, Mixed – White and Black African
3. Attending a routine antenatal appointment from the booking appointment to the 40-week appointment

Midwife participants:
1. White midwives delivering antenatal care at a participating site
2. White identity will be determined by self-identification as White - British, White - Irish or White – any other White background, as indicated on their consent form

Participant type(s)
Health professional, Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
100 Years

Sex
Female

Total final enrolment
33

Key exclusion criteria
Pregnant people participants:
1. Pregnant women or birthing people who do not meet all the inclusion criteria, e.g., pregnant people with other racially characterised ethnicities
2. Pregnant people who require a formal or informal interpreter during their appointment
3. Pregnant people with impaired capacity to consent, who require support to access antenatal care or make decisions about their care
4. Pregnant people under the age of 18 years
5. Pregnant people attending a non-routine or 41- or 42-week appointment

Midwife participants:
Participants who do not meet the inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
22/07/2024

Date of final enrolment
23/07/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

Study participating centre
The Whittington Hospital
Magdala Avenue
London
England
N19 5NF

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Ulster

ROR
https://ror.org/01yp9g959

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Arts and Humanities Research Council

Alternative Name(s)
Arts and Humanities Research Board, AHRC, AHRB

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Research institutes and centers

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Basic results		09/07/2026	09/07/2026	No	No
Protocol file	version 2	29/05/2024	26/06/2024	No	No
Protocol file	version 3	17/07/2024	14/08/2024	No	No

Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes