



EQUITABLE CARE FOR BLACK, ASIAN AND MIXED ETHNICITY WOMEN

Staff update on providing unbiased care for at SFH Maternity during pregnancy and in the postnatal period

Pregnancy in the UK is generally safe, however Black, Asian or Mixed Ethnicity women have higher maternal death rates:

- **Asian women** are **TWICE** as likely to die compared to White women
- **Mixed Ethnicity women** are **THREE** times more likely to die
- **Black women** are **FIVE** times more likely to die, during pregnancy or the postnatal period (MBRRACE, 2019)

Causes of death included **cardiac issues, thrombosis, thromboembolism and neurological and psychological conditions**. Black women are also at an increased chance of having a **pre-term birth, stillbirth, neonatal death or a baby born with low birth weight**.

Black pregnant women are also EIGHT times more likely to be admitted to hospital with COVID-19, while Asian women are FOUR times as likely (NPEU, 2020). Women of ALL ethnicities, with risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes, aged over 35, or raised BMI may also be at higher risk of complications of COVID-19.

We need to consider why these health inequalities exist in order to prevent and reduce them - A recent study says women from these groups face "endemic structural racism when seeking and accessing healthcare, and they feel that their symptoms and signs are more often dismissed." (BMJ, 2020)



How can Sherwood Maternity work to address health inequalities for women?

1. Increase support of at-risk pregnant Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnicity women – have a **lower threshold to review, admit and consider multidisciplinary escalation** - **believe their experience and support with individualised and unbiased care.**
2. Advise women from these backgrounds they may be at higher risk of complications of **COVID-19** and to seek advice without delay if at all concerned about their health - **reassure and encourage them to contact their midwife or local unit ASAP about them or their baby.**
3. Discuss vitamins, supplements and nutrition in pregnancy - **Women low in vitamin D may be more vulnerable to Coronavirus with women with darker skin or those who always cover their skin when outside** may be at particular risk and should consider taking a **daily supplement of vitamin D** all year.
4. **Record the ethnicity of every woman on our systems**, as well as other risk factors, such as living in a deprived area, co-morbidities, BMI and aged 35 years or over, to identify those most at risk of poor outcomes.
5. **Support breastfeeding and maximising breastmilk, especially for women who are Covid+** – ensure Covid+ protocols followed (PPE and milk storage), and refer any feeding issues to the Lime Green Team promptly.



Learning points for practice

For all SFH Maternity staff **TERMINOLOGY UPDATE**

Congenital Dermal Melanocytosis (CDM) or 'blue-grey spot' *(NHS, July 2020)*



CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CARING FOR WOMEN AND BABIES WITH DARKER SKIN TONES

- In a world where darker skin tones is the majority, we cannot afford to treat white skin as the default in our practice
- **Cyanosis** may not be as apparent
- **Rashes:** check paler areas like palms, soles, eyes or roof of mouth
- **Pressure ulcers:** check skin temp, hardness and oedema, consider early referral to skin viability
- **Mastitis and DVT** may not have visible red areas on darker skin, so awareness of other symptoms is vital for prompt diagnosis and referral

(Nekisha Killings, 2020, Midwives Against Racism, 2020)

DISCUSS, DIAGNOSE, DOCUMENT

Midwives share relevant information about health conditions with ALL women in our care...

....however Midwives should be vigilant and aware that Black women have greater chance of developing the following conditions:

- **Pre- eclampsia**
- **Hypertension**
- **Gestational Diabetes**
- **Preterm birth**
- **Fibroids**
- **Mental Health**

And this information should be sensitively shared with Black women in our care, and documented.

(Mixing Up Motherhood, 2020)

COVID-19 AND ETHNICITY

During this pandemic, 55% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with the virus were from Black, Asian or other Mixed Ethnicity groups, despite only 13% of the UK population identifying this way (NPEU, 2020)

Midwives should provide information on associated symptoms and encourage women to contact the unit ASAP with any concerns: this includes discussion of awareness of swift referral for any Black, Asian or Mixed Ethnicity women experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.

Helpful Links

NHS advice for Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnicity women in pregnancy

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/06/nhs-boosts-support-for-pregnant-black-andethnic-minority-women/>

NCT - What BIPOC pregnant women need to know about Covid-19

<https://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/coronavirus-and-pregnancy/bame-and-pregnantwhat-you-need-know-about-coronavirus>

Using terminology - be specific

<https://www.packsight.com/which-is-right-term-african-american-vs-black-vs-bipoc-vs-poc-vs-bame/>

UKOSS report by NPEU (2020)

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/rcog-and-rcm-respond-to-ukoss-study-of-more-than-400-pregnant-women-hospitalised-with-coronavirus/>

BMJ report (2020)

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/03/05/women-from-ethnic-minorities-face-ethnicstructural-racism-when-seeking-and-accessing-healthcare/>

Why are so many black women still dying in childbirth? (July, 2020)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/black-maternity-deaths-women-childbirth-many-agyeiwaa-agyapong-a9625276.html>

Latest MBRRACE report

<https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrrace-uk/reports/MBRRACEUK%20Maternal%20Report%202019%20-%20WEB%20VERSION.pdf>

How we can make changes to address findings of MBRRACE

<https://www.aims.org.uk/journal/item/diverse-not-defective>

RCOG launches equality taskforce

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/rcog-launches-race-equality-taskforce/>

Why are Black mothers at more risk of dying? (UK)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-47115305>

Addressing the race gap in UK maternity care

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/race-motherhood-black-mothers-dyingchildbirth_uk_5c078da3e4b0a6e4ebd9d5ec

Black women and neglected mental health

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/03/24/black-women-neglected-12406357/>

Black Breastfeeding Week

<https://blackbreastfeedingweek.org/>

Breast assessment for Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnicity skin

<https://www.goldlearning.com/live-webinar/breast-assessment-and-non-white-skin-tones-detail>