

2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on

# Aging & Gerontology

June 26-27, 2017 San Diego, CA, USA

## BEING INVISIBLE: UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE SOUTH ASIAN POPULATION AND DEMENTIA SERVICE PROVISION

Atcha Maaria<sup>a</sup>, Froggatt Katherine<sup>a</sup>, Keegan Thomas<sup>a</sup>, Barnsley Kenneth<sup>a</sup> & Bingley Amanda<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup>ESRC, UK

People from the South Asian population are observed to have an elevated risk of developing dementia, related to a high incidence of diabetes and hypertension. However, this population appears to be under-represented in dementia research and the provision of services. The disparity between the prevalence of people with dementia and the reported incidence of dementia, especially among South Asian populations (the United Kingdom's largest ethnic minority), is of concern to public health service providers. This paper reports on mixed methods doctoral research that aimed to identify the social and cultural issues affecting the decisions of those people with dementia and their families in the South Asian population in Blackburn with Darwen (BwD), seeking health and social care support. The research involved two phases: Phase 1 assessed the incidence of dementia in BwD analyzing routinely collected demographic data including age, sex, and ethnicity. Phase 2 used qualitative methods to explore how members of the BwD South Asian population perceived dementia and those with relatives with the condition engaged with local dementia care services. Data was collected via three focus groups with people involved in a community project; dyad interviews with people living with dementia and their families; and interviews with health care professionals working in dementia services. Early findings suggest these South Asian participants hold negative perceptions of dementia strongly influenced by cultural beliefs, resulting in people with dementia being considered stigmatizing and are hidden away by their families. This may explain why health professionals report that this population seek help late in the illness, and there is an argument for public health services to develop culturally relevant outreach programs based on the Alzheimer's Society 'Dementia Friendly Communities'.

### Biography

Atcha Maaria is a PhD student in Health Research, with a key interest in promoting a positive image of dementia within the South Asian community. Following a BSc (Hons) in Psychology and Counseling and an MSc in Psychology with research, she started an ESRC funded PhD in October 2013, aiming to explore some of the factors influencing access to dementia diagnosis and support, within ethnically diverse communities in Blackburn with Darwen, a region of United Kingdom. She has worked with members of the South Asian community, as well as with people with dementia and their family members and with a third sector organization in ways of promoting access to dementia services by people from the South Asian community, by understanding the South Asian community's cultural perspective of dementia.

m.atcha@lancaster.ac.uk

### Notes: