



Inclusive Research Case Study 4

Obesity and obesity prevention

Staff: Emma Frew

College: College of Medical and Dental Sciences

School/Department: Centre for Economics of Obesity

Overview

This case study demonstrates the use of community engagement and trust-building in research involving underserved groups. Successful strategies include leveraging the lived experiences of Patient and Public Involvement representatives, fostering relationships with community leaders, and ensuring diverse backgrounds among researchers. Effective communication and regular updates to stakeholders are essential for maintaining involvement. The study highlights the importance of ongoing learning and the commitment to improving participants' lives through research.

Research Area: Obesity and obesity prevention

Population: Individuals from groups that are underrepresented in research

Involvement Methods:

- Accessing community researchers through the Institute of Global Innovation
- Using a market survey company to ensure diversity and inclusion

Facilitating Participation:

- Collaborating with community and religious organisations to engage participants
- Targeting community leaders to advocate for and support research recruitment
- Participating in events such as the Festival of Social Science and public-facing events at The Exchange

Known Participants/Organisations:

- Birmingham City Council
- Institute of Global Innovation
- Canal and River Trust
- Coventry City Council
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Obesity UK

Barriers to Contact:

- Difficulty in reaching and engaging communities

Facilitating Contact:

- Involving Patient and Public Involvement representatives with lived experiences or close connections to community groups
- Ensuring researchers have diverse backgrounds to facilitate access and shape the research inclusively

Funded by Research England under the Enhancing Research Culture funding stream, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration West Midlands and the NIHR Midlands Patient Safety Research Collaboration. We thank our patient and public team members and those who have supported and taken part in this work.



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Research Area: Obesity and obesity prevention

Population: Individuals from groups that are underrepresented in research

Maintaining Involvement:

- Effective communication that respects and values participants' perspectives
- Providing time and space for open dialogue without judgment

Maintaining Organisational Involvement:

- Regular monthly meetings with organisations and stakeholders to provide updates
- Forming and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, such as founders of patient societies (eg, Obesity UK)
- Building trust and demonstrating a commitment to improving participants' lives, not just using them for research purposes

Promoting Researcher Confidence:

- Gaining experience in running training sessions for patient and public involvement groups and receiving training
- Developing safe spaces through getting to know participants and effective communication
- Recognising that learning is an ongoing process and continuously seeking improvement

"[the question] What can we do to help you?" is really important"

"My relationship with him came about from when I was a Trustee in the Association for the study of obesity which is a UK organisation and he was part of that. So, being a Trustee, I was able to get to know him and formed a relationship with him before I started to involve him in my own research. I think this is really important because it is really important to have that sort of relationship to start with; to try and explain that you are here to try and make their lives better rather than just to use them for your own purposes. It is about working together".