

# Working in partnership with ethnic minority groups to encourage early diagnosis of cancer

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## Introduction

Low breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening uptake among Muslim women puts them at risk for lack of early diagnosis.

Participatory and community centred approaches are a key strategy in addressing health inequalities (1). The Medical Research Council's (MRC) guidance on complex interventions indicates the importance of designing, developing, and delivering interventions in partnership with the target population (2).

Barriers and facilitators to early diagnosis of cancer are complex and multifactorial, ranging from cognitive factors such as lack of awareness to emotional, practical, cultural, and religious factors (3).

Cultural tailoring can be an effective method of addressing screening barriers and can assist in developing targeted interventions to promote screening (4,5).



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## Aim

We aimed to co-design with Muslim women in Scotland a culturally acceptable, faith-based online health education intervention to increase uptake of breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening in Muslim women, deliver the intervention and evaluate the intervention for feasibility and acceptability.

## Involving members of the community to design the intervention

This study used a community-centred co-design approach based on the World Café method for large-group dialogue to develop the intervention in collaboration with the Muslim women.

The World Café method provides a comfortable informal setting which facilitates the inclusion and exchange of diverse views on a topic (6) and enables researchers to engage more deeply with the communities they serve and thus generate richer insights.

In 2021, Muslim women (n=10) residing in Scotland, aged 25-74, were recruited through snowball sampling from a mosque and community organisations, who became the co-design group. The co-design phase consisted of four workshops, covering the following:

- I. How does Islam advise about health screening?
- II. Barriers to cancer screening and faith-based messages
- III. Bringing faith-based screening advice to Muslim women
- IV. Training the messengers/ intervention development

The co-design work resulted in a four-part multidimensional intervention (figure 1)

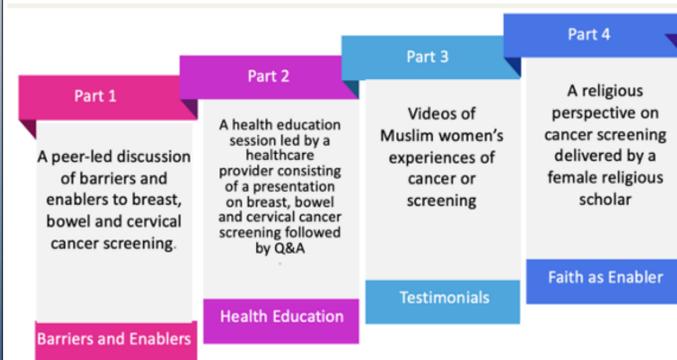


Figure 1 The intervention; the 4-part co-designed workshop

## Involving members of the community to deliver the intervention

The co-design group thought the role of 'peer-educators' as a trusted source in the community, would be beneficial in the delivery of the intervention. Therefore, in the final workshop we focused on training members of the co-design group as 'peer-educators' and discussed the skills required for facilitating the workshop, as illustrated by our graphic designer in figure 2.



Figure 2 Graphic illustration of workshop 4

## Outcome

The co-design group were a dedicated group and all ten women stayed with us through the research. After each workshop we conducted a short anonymous feedback survey. These demonstrated the women found the research interesting and were glad they participated.

The intervention was delivered twice online in March 2021. Two focus groups were conducted one week later to qualitatively evaluate the intervention. The intervention was received positively. Further investigation is required to establish effectiveness of the intervention.

In conclusion, participatory and community-centred approaches can play an important role in tackling health inequalities.

## Next steps

The pilot work and the participatory approach used, led to the development of two further studies:

1. Improving uptake of breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening among Muslim women: a non-randomised feasibility study of a peer-led, faith-based intervention.

This 36 months study, starting in January 2023, will build on the previous work and will conduct a feasibility trial in the North-East of England and in Scotland. This work is funded by Cancer Research UK.



2. Early Prostate Cancer Detection in Black Men (PROCAN-B)

This 24-months mixed-methods study, which started in September 2022, also takes a community-centred and participatory approach. We are working in partnership with the black community in the North East of England and Scotland.

The aim of the study is to co-design a culturally appropriate intervention to tackle barriers to early diagnosis of prostate cancer for black men in Scotland and the North-East of England. This work is funded by Prostate Cancer Research.



Photo credit: Barbara Olsen



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