

Press Release

13 September 2011

MPHDS

NHS partnership to raise awareness on Faith & Dementia

Faith-based organisations are coming together at a conference to promote awareness of Dementia Healthcare in the NHS. The conference *'Faith and Dementia in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities'* will be held at the New Testament Church of God, 20 Upper Chorlton Road, Brooks Bar, Manchester M16 7RN from Friday 16 – Sunday 18 September 2011.

Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust's Public Health Development Service will be taking part in the conference which will run from 6.30pm – 9.00pm on Friday evening, from 11.00am – 5.00pm on Saturday and 11.00am – 1.00pm on Sunday. The conference is open to the public and free of charge. The aim is to raise awareness on Dementia with a particular focus on BME communities. There will be presentations from NHS providers and opportunities to meet the professionals as well as discussions and question and answer session.

Organiser Dr Dawn Edge, Research Fellow, University of Manchester said:

"We have organised the conference in response to increasing need in the area of dementia care both within our congregation and the communities we serve. We are aware that some BME people tend to get dementia at an earlier age but access care later with more advanced symptoms. This might be at least partly because there is limited awareness and understanding of the condition within Black populations.

"Locally, services (including charities and voluntary agencies) do not appear equipped to deal with the specific needs of BME communities – particularly in relation to ensuring that their spiritual, dietary, and specific personal care needs (such as skin and hair care) are met."

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Together we are better



This conference hopes to create an environment in which people can learn more about dementia, directly from people who have been diagnosed with the condition, from those who care for them and the people who provide/commission dementia services. The role of the church in ensuring that people with dementia and their carers are cared for holistically will be explored.

People of all faiths (and none) are welcome to attend. Although the conference is at a 'Black-Majority Church', they anticipate a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural audience. At their last conference, 33 different self-assigned ethnic identities were reported by over 500 delegates.

Dementia currently costs the UK economy about £23 billion per year. This is twice the cost of cancer, three times the cost of heart disease and four times the cost of stroke.

It is estimated that the number of people currently living with dementia in the UK ranges from around 684, 000 to 822,000. Among these, it is thought that approximately 15,000 are from a minority group, with this figure anticipated to rise sharply.

Studies show that vascular dementia (caused by problems with the supply to the brain) in particular, is more common among African-Caribbean people as they are more prone to the risk factors for vascular dementia such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes. However by adopting a healthy lifestyle: diet, exercise and smoking cessation, the risk of developing vascular dementia can be reduced.

Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust's Public Health Development Service is working with organisations across the city and supporting this conference in this part of the work.

Douglas Inchbold, Public Health Development Manager said:

"Carers of BME communities may feel reluctant to ask for help, partly because dementia care services are not tailored to meet their needs and partly through the fear and the stigma attached to dementia. This initiative will no doubt raise awareness of dementia amongst BME communities – an important first step in improving access."

Anyone who wishes to book on the conference can contact Dr Dawn Edge on 07796 202806. To register contact church administrator Janet McDonald on 0161 226 6999 or email ntcgbooksbar@btconnect.com. To register online visit: www.ntcgbooksbar.org.uk/events.

Ends

For media enquiries contact
Jenny Cowell, Communications Officer, 0161 861 2588

Notes to editors

- Manchester Public Health Development Service transferred from NHS Manchester to Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust on 1 April 2011.
- People from BME communities in the UK are more likely than the white majority to be practising their religious faith¹⁻². In one study a higher proportion of African-Caribbean people affirmed a religious (predominantly Christian) belief than that of the white population or other minority ethnic communities³. South Asian women, have also been identified as using prayer as a major coping strategy for depression⁴.

Research has shown that religious involvement is associated with positive mental health outcomes⁵. A growing number of studies also emphasize the importance of spiritual beliefs and the value of support from faith communities for people with mental health problems⁶⁻⁷. Other studies have found a resistance to spiritual issues within mental health services, where religious beliefs are sometimes interpreted as symptoms of illness⁸⁻¹⁰.

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http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/Keeping_the_faith.pdf

