

# CLAHRC BITE

*“We don’t do dementia.”* May 2016

*A CLAHRC NT qualitative study identified barriers to help-seeking for memory problems among Black African and Caribbean British communities.*

Black African and Caribbean elders (BACe) present later to dementia specialist services, often in crisis and leading to poorer outcomes.

In their work towards producing an intervention to encourage access to dementia services, CLAHRC researchers have heard first-hand perceptions and beliefs among Black adults that prevent them from approaching their GP when they have concerns about memory problems - an early indicator of dementia.



The study comprised semi-structured focus groups and interviews, recruiting 50 participants across a range of age groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

Focus groups and interviews revealed five main beliefs and perceptions preventing people's seeking help for dementia:

- Forgetfulness is not indicative of dementia
- Dementia is not an illness affecting Black communities
- Memory problems are not important enough to seek medical help
- Fear of lifestyle changes
- Confidentiality, privacy and family duty

“An old person starting to forget...it’s part of growing old.”

“When you talk about dementia...this is an old White peoples disease.”

“...You would just feel that you’re wasting the GPs time.”

“I would be thinking that the help is within the family, so I wouldn’t look for external help.”

## Recommendations for practice

The results of this study suggest that a more targeted approach towards Black adults regarding dementia is needed, in order to reduce healthcare inequalities. The paper recommends designing an intervention which;

- a) includes key information about dementia, symptoms and support available
- b) encourages Black adults to seek help earlier from their GP for memory problems
- c) allays worries about loss of autonomy, breach of confidentiality and freedom of choice

## Next steps

CLAHRC researchers are now trialling the intervention they have developed to overcome some of the barriers to help-seeking for memory problems in Black African and Caribbean British communities.



## Useful links:

Full citation - Berwald S, Roche M, Adelman S, Mukadam N, Livingston G (2016) [Black African and Caribbean British Communities' Perceptions of Memory Problems: "We Don't Do Dementia."](#) PLoS ONE 11(4): e0151878. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0151878

Project information - <http://www.clahrc-norththames.nihr.ac.uk/memory-problems-black-african-and-caribbean-groups/>

NHS website - <http://nhs.uk/dementia>

Alzheimer's Society website - <http://alzheimers.org.uk>

## About CLAHRC NT:

NIHR CLAHRC North Thames conducts ground breaking research that will have a direct impact on the health of patients with long term conditions and on the health of the public. We bring together world-leading universities, the NHS, local authorities, patients, the public, industry and charities. The NIHR fund CLAHRCs in order to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. Visit us at [www.clahrc-norththames.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.clahrc-norththames.nihr.ac.uk) and follow us on Twitter [@CLAHRC N Thames](https://twitter.com/CLAHRC_N_Thames)