

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the overall experiences of students regarding the social, psychological, economic and educational aspects of their lives prior to and during the pandemic.
- To identify what, if any, differences in those experiences existed between White and BAME students and between genders.

METHODOLOGIES

- 35 participants - in years 2 to 4 of their undergraduate studies (N=30) or enrolled on postgraduate programmes (N=5)
- Average age of 21.7 years
- 17 Students of White Ethnicity: 8 male; 8 female; 1 Gender Fluid person
- 18 BAME students: 6 male; 12 female
- Conducted between November 2020 and May 2021
- Interviews lasted between 25 min to just over 60 minutes

In depth one to one interviews were conducted with 35 BAME and White students from various universities via video-conferencing platforms about their experiences of life prior to and during the pandemic. Interview transcripts were checked for accuracy and were analysed using a computer coding software for themes.

RESULTS

- Living at home- personal space
- Personal hygiene
- Self-care: Exercise/Diet
- Maintaining effective infection control practices for safety of self, family and others
- Vaccinations

Physical

Social

- Life at home with family
- Relationships with friends
- Using social media to connect with the world
- Communication from institutions and government
- Cultural festivals
- Concerns about BAME healthcare workers

General wellbeing

Education

- Initial response to pandemic
- Impact of news about the virus on news and social media
- Ethnicity & experiences of racism
- General wellbeing

- Managing Online lectures/ exam /disability
- Loss of experiential learning and student identity
- Return to campus
- Graduation-is it happening?

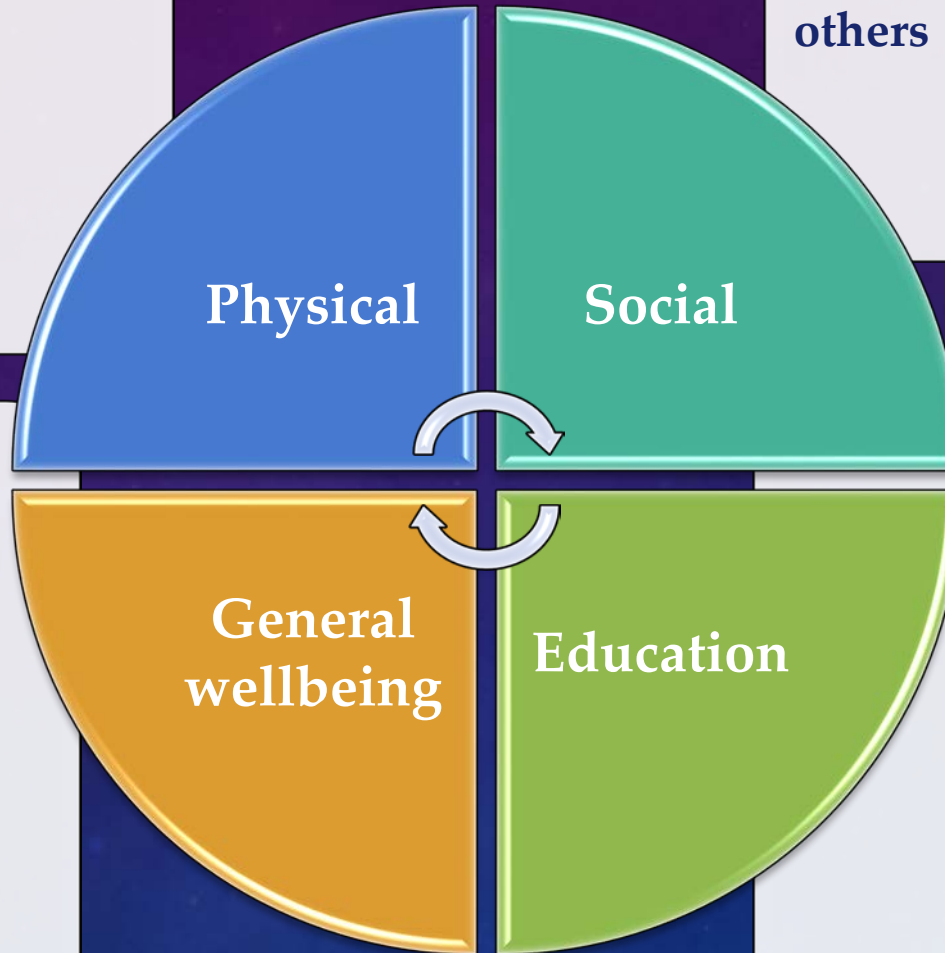
RESULTS

Vaccines

- BF10: "I don't feel comfortable taking the vaccine ...lots of side effects ..risk of blood clots
- ...different types of vaccines ...you don't really know...,"
- BM4: "my mum believes that, if she if she has manuka honey, or if she has herbal teas and things like that it will boost your immune system"
- BF8:" the older like uncles and follow these Indian traditions of drinking turmeric and milk or some stuff like that, and then we're not going to get COVID"

Mental Health & racialized Stigma

- BM6: "White teenagers literally *throw sticks at me*....it was quite a *terrifying* feeling to feel that , it's just *horrendous* - just took it to the next level - I was that close to *being physically abused; really scary* and I I was just numb ; mind boggling like how people could do things like that
- WF3: "I was diagnosed with *Borderline Personality Disorder*, last year, and I've been taking medication, going to therapy.
-doing really well until the pandemic started *and then my routine was taken away*. So I completely lost my momentum and everything was just very my head was very cluttered
- ...*I've been sort of using food as my comfort - (I gained 20 kg)"*



Concerns for self & others

- BF2: "the only other comment I'd have to make is How bad in the NHS work and how underappreciated they are and the fact that BAME doctors and nurses and we're , in terms of mortality were the most affected. And I think that that was very, very upsetting as a person of colour"
- WM3: "so depressed at how deadly everything was".
- WM2: (became a carer of parents) "It's overwhelming. I'm currently on medication for stuff"

Lack of study space at home

- WGF1: "you kind of felt like need that the university didn't really know what to do,".
- WF5:"I'm currently in this office in my house, which is in our back garden. So I just come out here. I sit on my laptop"
- BF12: "Finding the time to revise and finding your own space in the house is quite difficult because I share bedroom, and to revise is quite difficult. I have three siblings so the six people living in the House so it's quite, packed..."

RESULTS

- Mental health issues prevalent in most students in form of anxiety, but BAME females were found to suffer the most from mental health illnesses compared to White students. BAME males tended to experience anxiety the most out of all the groups.
- White females were supported mainly by their families and did not have any financial worries. In contrast, most BAME females continued working during the pandemic whilst White females experienced a reduction in personal hygiene as they felt they had nothing to get out of bed for.
- Whilst a loss of student identity was experienced by all respondents, BAME females felt it the most, probably because of a lack of personal space in their family homes. They were also more concerned about passing the virus on to their extended families. This was not the case with the White students.
- BAME females also spent more time using social media than any other group.

RESULTS

- All groups agreed that communication from their host institution and government lacked clarity.
- There were mixed views about the level of learning resources and support provided during the pandemic.
- The use of pre-recorded teaching material was not seen to be value for money since the quality was poor and some were outdated.
- BAME students felt very strongly about preventing them from attending cultural festivals with their families as this was seen as targeting them unfairly as the cause of virus spread amongst certain communities.

IMPLICATIONS

- BAME females suffered from mental health problems more so than other groups, especially when living at home.
- The mixed views about the level of learning support and student mental health services provided during the pandemic indicate that Universities need to be better prepared about online education and that mental health services need to be aware of the specific needs of BAME female students and BAME students in general.
- Universities need to be better prepared for providing support for students who have suffered from racialized stigmatization

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And thank you for listening.....