

<b>Institution:</b> De Montfort University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 4		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Developing Culturally Sensitive and Evidence-Based Interventions to Promote the Health and Well-Being of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Gay, Bisexual and Men Who Have Sex with Men (GBMSM)		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014–2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Rusi Jaspal	Principal Investigator, Pro Vice Chancellor of Research	2 January 2013–31 March 2020
Professor Julie Fish	Co-Investigator, Chair Social Work and Health Inequalities	1 October 1999–31 December 2019 and 6 January 2020–present
Dr Iain Williamson	Co-Investigator, Associate Professor in Applied Psychology	1 January 2005–present
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<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> October 2014–December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> <p>BAME GBMSM communities disproportionately receive a later diagnosis of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) when compared to white GBMSM and heterosexuals, adversely impacting health and psychological well-being. BAME GBMSM also face mental-health inequalities associated with increased stress. DMU's research team have provided evidence that has changed how third sector service providers work with BAME GBMSM, improving the inclusion, health and well-being outcomes of these marginalised groups. Specifically, in response to DMU's service evaluation and a 29% increase of BAME GBMSM attending workshops, a pre-existing coaching service in London was expanded to create new BAME GBMSM-specific provision, <i>Mosaic</i>. Another new service, <i>Dosti</i>, is being run by the first South Asian support worker in Leicester, which has tripled membership and increased the number receiving sexual-health support. Finally, 275 South Asian GBMSM tested for HIV in London, Leeds and Bradford as a result of the DMU research-informed public awareness health campaign, <i>Sholay Love</i>, that has also aimed to further the global public health media debate around South Asian GBMSM requiring specific intervention (South Asian BAME have been found to be least likely to test for HIV).</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> <p>In response to the sexual-health disparities and mental-health inequalities within BAME GBMSM communities, Public Health England commissioned an unprecedented evaluative research project funded by MAC AIDS Foundation (charitable arm of the cosmetic company MAC) that could inform future interventions for these marginalised communities. DMU won this competitive tender and completed a project titled, 'Evaluating interventions for black and ethnic minority men who have sex with men' (GBP38,404, 2014–2015).</p> <p>The evaluative research project led to a Public Health England report in 2016 [R1] that included a systematic review by DMU of the few existing interventions for BAME GMSM, most of which were from countries outside England, and a mixed-methods evaluation study of 3 interventions run by charities in England. The first intervention evaluated was a cognitive-behavioral therapy programme run by the charity METRO, in London, to understand the evidence behind combining</p>		

HIV prevention, testing and care with psychological therapy for BAME GBMSM. Thanks to the programme, men showed improvements from pre- to post-intervention in psychological well-being and self-efficacy. In interviews, men reported that the service was culturally appropriate and that it was a non-judgemental safe space. The second intervention considered workshops using coaching and counselling principles to support gay identity and understand motivations behind risky behaviours. Four workshops were run with charity The Quest and pre/post-intervention data showed significant improvements in decreasing internalised homophobia, increasing self-esteem, increasing self-efficacy, increasing psychological well-being and decreasing intention to engage in sex on drugs. The men reported they felt better equipped to develop meaningful non-sexual relationships, and that they were provided strategies to increase intimacy and decrease 'dysfunctional' uses of sex to make better 'health related choices around sex'. The third intervention was with the charity NAZ, and their Selfie Programme, which aimed to develop a positive sexual identity and empower men to promote sexual health in their communities. Results of the pre/post-intervention questionnaires showed significant improvements on measures of attitudes towards condom use, sexual risk-taking, attitudes towards alcohol, sense of continuity, perceived access to public services and participation in sex using drugs. In the qualitative interviews, participants said there was a benefit when information was delivered in their native language and that there was a sense of social identity formed from being in a group with others who have the same ethno-cultural heritage. Participation in the groups also decreased feelings of anxiety and depression, and those living with HIV felt they could disclose their status and their depression within the groups. Findings from the 3 interventions in the governmental -commissioned DMU report concluded there was a lack of theoretically, culturally sensitive and evidence-based interventions for BAME GBMSM while suggesting principles for enhanced provision [R1].

The disparities experienced by BAME GBMSM have been explained by psychologists at DMU using Identity Process Theory, which explains identity threats associated with sexuality, religion and ethnicity. The sexual identity of BAME GBMSM is often incongruent with their religious and ethnic identities, due to a high prevalence of homophobia and social exclusion in their ethno-cultural communities, while their well-being when on the gay scene is also at threat due to religious and ethnic prejudice from other GBMSM. This can result in difficulties establishing close interpersonal relationships, low self-esteem and increased susceptibility to other negative psychological outcomes [R2]. Mental-health inequalities result in higher rates of depression in BAME GBMSM due to discrimination, rejection, racism, internalised homophobia and not disclosing their gay identity, when compared to whites. Depression in this group is mediated by situational stress. Compared to white GBMSM, BAME GBMSM use more problematic coping strategies, including drugs, when faced with stress, and are less likely to seek support. The higher rates of suicidal ideation amongst BAME GBMSM are also related to higher rates of internalised homophobia. Having a space where BAME GBMSM feel safe to seek help acts a buffer against the situational stress that can result in suicidal ideation and depression [R3].

Further research by psychologists at DMU has highlighted the key barriers to HIV prevention and HIV care, including perceived homophobia and racism towards ethnic minorities, which specifically leads to a decrease in willingness to test for HIV. BAME GBMSM prefer testing in a community setting, through a charity, rather than using a medical clinic, with the men feeling more comfortable with those who share similar ethnic backgrounds to their own. In the pre-test questionnaires, which asked about testing for HIV, the results suggest it is less intrusive to test for HIV in community settings as this decreases perceived stigma and builds rapport with the community worker [R4]. Among BAME GBMSM there is less knowledge around HIV, when compared to white GBMSM. Specifically, South Asian GBMSM score the lowest of all BAME groups for knowledge of HIV and think it is less likely they would have been exposed to HIV, resulting in less engagement in testing and higher rates of a late diagnosis. The research findings recommend that an awareness raising campaign could further educate this group to increase the rate of HIV testing among Asian GBMSM [R5]. Ground-breaking research was further conducted on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), an effective biomedical approach to prevent HIV transmission. There are several barriers to using PrEP, such as use of stigmatising terminology and low HIV risk appraisal. PrEP acceptability can be increased by introducing PrEP to the GBMSM service users following a negative HIV test. This innovative research, on a drug

that was in clinical trials until July 2020 and is to become available on the NHS, has provided DMU researchers with a specialised skillset in sexual health that is under researched [R6]. Overall, the first service evaluation of interventions and the subsequent publications provide psychologists at DMU with specialised and distinct expertise to improve third sector services' approach when creating interventions for both the mental and sexual health of BAME GBMSM.

### 3. References to the research

- [R1] Jaspal, R., Fish, J., Papaloukas, P. and Williamson, I.R. (2016) *Black and Minority Ethnic Men Who Have Sex with Men: Project Evaluation and Systematic Review*, Public Health England;  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525843/BlackandminorityethnicmenwhohavesexwithmenProjectevaluationandsystematicreview.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525843/BlackandminorityethnicmenwhohavesexwithmenProjectevaluationandsystematicreview.pdf)
- [R2] Jaspal, R. (2017) 'Coping with perceived ethnic prejudice on the gay scene', *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 14(2): 172–190; <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2016.1264907>
- [R3] Jaspal, R., Lopes, B. and Rehman, Z. (2019) 'A structural equation model for predicting depressive symptomatology in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the UK', *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1–18, ahead of print; <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2019.1690560>
- [R4] Jaspal, R. (2018) 'Perceptions of HIV testing venues among men who have sex with men in London and the Midlands, UK', *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 30(4): 336–355; <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2018.1516587>
- [R5] Jaspal, R., Jamal, Z., Yap, C., Paccoud, I. and Sekhon, P. (2018) 'HIV knowledge, sexual health and behaviour among black and minority ethnic men who have sex with men in the UK: a cross-sectional study', *Sexual Health*, 16(1): 25–31; <https://doi.org/10.1071/SH18032>
- [R6] Jaspal, R., Lopes, B., Bayley, J. and Papaloukas, P. (2019) 'A structural equation model to predict the acceptability of pre-exposure prophylaxis in men who have sex with men in Leicester, UK', *HIV Medicine*, 20(1): 11–18; <https://doi.org/10.1111/hiv.12667>

### GRANT

Public Health England (2014–2016) GBP38,404.

### 4. Details of the impact

The findings from both the governmental Public Health England report commissioned from DMU and the published research by DMU have provided evidence that has changed how third sector services work with BAME GBMSM, specifically through adopting theoretically informed culturally sensitive and evidence-based interventions. Charities such as The Quest, Trade and NAZ have implemented findings from DMU's service evaluation research and have decreased not only the disparities and inequalities BAME GBMSM face, but have improved inclusion within services for BAME, most notably British Asian GBMSM. More detail, with examples of the impact delivered to third sector organisation, is provided below:

#### (1) THE QUEST PROGRAMMES

The Quest, a London-based charity, run a range of coaching/counselling, psycho-education and peer-support interventions to enhance GBMSM's well-being. In their workshops, men explore their motivations for risky and negative coping behaviours through a range of activities to buffer low mood, poor self-esteem and anxiety. The charity found DMU's service evaluation research essential due to the prior lack of systematic evidence and theory to improve service interventions for minority groups: 'This has been very worrying as data suggest higher rates of depression, internalised shame, self-harm behaviours and HIV in gay and bisexual men in many British BAME communities' [C1]. DMU's service evaluation findings were applied when BAME men began to comprise 29% of attendees in workshops in 2019. In response, The Quest prepared to diversify their provision by focusing on BAME GBMSM in the development and launch of Quest Mosaic for Black, Asian and other racially minoritised men. The Quest have made several

enhancements to their practice. 'To ensure efficacy of the workshops, The Quest have consulted with Dr Williamson to look at appropriate well-being measures which might be useful in gathering further evidence' [C1]. They have now adopted the use of quantitative measures before and after interventions to assess self-reported benefits. This provides a systematic form of evaluation that has an in-depth approach, complementing qualitative data that previously was used exclusively. Using pre- and post-intervention tests has also provided them a robustness to their evaluations that cannot be achieved using only qualitative measures. The Quest have also directly responded to two criticisms from DMU's service evaluation research in their design and implementation of *Mosaic*: (1) they have introduced differentiated coaching for individuals and group coaching, with up to 6 participants at one time, in response to feedback from some participants that group numbers were too big, and (2), they have ensured that all Mosaic services are facilitated by GBMSM coaches from BAME backgrounds, as some participants are 'reluctant to take part in a service where they anticipate that some of the facilitators are white', and this is reflected in their marketing strategy [C1].

## (2) DOSTI

Trade Sexual Health is a Leicester-based charity that serves over 2,000 individuals from the LGBT community. Trade Sexual Health states that DMU's research expertise, particularly in Identity Process Theory, has provided the charity with insight into inclusion barriers, including social support and well-being [C2]. These barriers to engagement are further based on the complexities of having a sexual, religious and ethnic identity that may be conflicted: 'Identity theory has helped in the delivery of practical and emotional in-depth support to these individuals [and] provided support and evidence for a successful funding bid to support *Dosti* ... enabling continued peer-led emotional and social support' [C2]. *Dosti* is a peer-to-peer support group facilitated by the first GBMSM Support Worker in Leicester who has the same ethno-cultural background as the members, which was also a role created as part of the funding bid supported by DMU. Based on its success *Dosti* continues to run monthly meetings and has tripled its membership. The group has a vibrant presence on social media, which has provided 'further opportunities, such as training for South Asian targeted services (mental health) on LGBT awareness in Leicester' [C2]. The group has improved the well-being of BAME GBMSM who, according to DMU's research, are at high risk of depressive symptoms. Group members have reported increased 'self-confidence, [and] reduced social isolation, through Trade's on-site and outreach sexual-health screening clinics, in partnership with Leicester Sexual Health, and [through] rapid HIV testing clinics, delivered by staff and volunteers' [C2]. Having community members receive HIV testing from charities and by people with a similar ethnic background to their own was found to increase the likelihood of testing for HIV and acceptance of PrEP in DMU's research. Comments from group members also indicate that *Dosti* has increased inclusion by both having 'their feelings and identity validated and [being] able to be their authentic selves, even if just for a short period of time' [C2].

## (3) SHOLAY LOVE

NAZ, a BAME sexual-health charity that provides services in 13 boroughs across London, describes the overall research by DMU as 'vital in transforming the organisation ... [into a] thought leader providing an evidence base of sexual-health interventions and advocating for the needs of BAME sexual health at policy and government level' [C3]. As a result, NAZ conducted their first service evaluation of over 300 BAME GBMSM, with survey results changing the way they create and deliver services. The research by DMU on Identity Process Theory has also informed NAZ's prevention strategy and sexual-health service delivery. DMU's research on sexual-health and mental-health inequalities has also fostered inclusion in service delivery 'to offer a combined sexual, mental, advocacy and referral offer to BAME MSM which is tailored differently to the offer for White MSM' [C3]. The research expertise of DMU on HIV testing and sexual health has informed NAZ's creation of the public awareness campaign, *Sholay Love*, a sexual-health amplification campaign targeting South Asian GBMSM at risk of acquiring HIV. The campaign was funded by the Public Health England Innovation Fund for HIV and led by NAZ in collaboration with the charity Yorkshire MESMAC to expand the reach of testing for HIV within the charities' locations in London, Leeds and Bradford. The sexual-health amplification programme has been featured as part of a dual broadcast between BBC Asian Network and



Victoria Derbyshire/BBC2 [C4], which have an international reach [C3]. Professor Jaspal was featured in the international broadcasts as an expert on South Asian GBMSM and HIV, adding to the public media debate, stating, 'We know that South Asian gay and bisexual men are less likely to engage with sexual-health services than other ethnic minority groups and the white British majority.' [C4] This international debate that South Asian GBMSM are the BAME GBMSM group least likely, without intervention, to engage with sexual-health services to test for HIV has shaped *Sholay Love* to increase South Asian GBMSM's testing for HIV [C4]. In a news article by OUTNEWS Global, who have an international readership of LGBT individuals, DMU's research was cited again with the launch of *Sholay Love*, continuing to provide evidence, as part of the public global debate, that South Asian GBMSM are unlikely to test for HIV due to the cultural identity of this group. The article states, 'South Asian MSM are less likely to access sexual-health screening ... less likely to discuss HIV ... and possess the least knowledge of HIV' [C5]. The *Sholay Love* campaign resulted in the HIV testing of 275 South Asian men and reached thousands of South Asian men through outreach, workshops and online resources [C6]. In recognition for the role his research has played in shaping a culturally sensitive service for South Asian GBMSM, who are service users at NAZ, Professor Jaspal received the South Asian nOSCAR award [C7]. The nOSCAR celebrates those who have either worked to increase the representation of South Asians or improved the delivery of culturally sensitive services. A second award by NAZ, the Ten out of Ten Award, was bestowed upon Professor Jaspal for his research on HIV and BAME GBMSM. This award honoured individuals 'mainly from minority communities [as] minority communities have, and continue to be, disproportionately impacted by HIV' [C8]. A photograph was unveiled at the House of Lords to recognise the honouree [C8] and the British Psychological Society further recognised that this made 'an unforgettable mark in the fight against HIV' [C9].

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [C1] Letter from Co-Founder and Co-Director, Quest.
- [C2] Letter from Senior Health Promotion & Intersectional Lead, Trade Sexual Health, Leicester.
- [C3] Letter from CEO, NAZ, London.
- [C4] Video from BBC Victoria Derbyshire. *BBC News*. Health: 'Why HIV is misunderstood among South Asians', 3 October 2018; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-45725770> [see Image].
- [C5] OUTNEWS GLOBAL, 'NAZ launches of "Sholay Love" for South Asian men who have sex with men', Newsdesk, 4 October 2018; <http://outnewsglobal.com/naz-launches-of-sholay-love-for-south-asian-men-who-have-sex-with-men/> [see Image].
- [C6] Gov.uk Press Release, 'Innovative HIV prevention projects reached 170,000 people in 2018', 30 January 2019; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/innovative-hiv-prevention-projects-reached-170000-people-in-2018> [see Image].
- [C7] South Asian nOSCAR Award, NAZ, London, 'DMU Professor wins national prize for sexual health work', [see Image].
- [C8] Ten Out of Ten Awards, Black Cultural Archives; <https://blackculturalarchives.org/1010-awards> [see Image 1] and 10 out of 10 Awards. Portrait NAZ House of Lords Unveiled. [see Image],
- [C9] BPS News, 'BPS Fellow makes "unforgettable mark" in the fight against HIV', 4 September 2019; <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-fellow-makes-unforgettable-mark-fight-against-hiv>