

Viewpoints



Race and Racism in Primary Care

The *Black Lives Matter* campaign has highlighted issues of race and racism which are present in all parts of our communities and organisations. BJGP Open is inviting Viewpoints to document experiences of racism in primary care as a patient, practitioner, trainee, or researcher.

This initiative sits outside the usual BJGP Open framework for research and commentary, and has been created as a rapid access format for sharing information.

What is your full name?

Dr Mohammed Sattar

What is your role?

GP

Please describe the experience of race and/or racism that you would like to share

'Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you'

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said that you should 'fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you'¹. On the 18th September 2020, we lost US Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg and obituaries have poured in to remember her contribution to the world. Many of these capture pictures of her but also her own words. We all have lived experiences, hers was gender equality and discrimination. In the year 1956, she was one of nine women accepted to Harvard Law School, out of a class of about 500. At the end of 2019, in my general practice consulting room, I too realised that I had my own similar experiences to share. I was subjected to two incidences of micro-aggressions related to my race. Then came number 8233 of the BMJ entitled 'Born Equal', 'Racism in Medicine.'² The fire in my belly was ignited. The year of the COVID-19 pandemic has further shone a real spotlight on already known BAME inequalities. The Race and Racism issue is a complex and convoluted one but one that if we get right, will, surely result in better workplaces and better care. My 'first follower', a local trust chief executive joined me for a focus group one evening at my practice, which led to a unique grass roots movement. We now have a BAME Primary Care Network in Leeds! I will never forget something that a distinguished colleague said to me, "plus ça change", literally meaning, "The more it changes, the more it's the same thing."³ The truth is, this issue requires courage and I call upon all of you to be courageous, as I know these are things that you also care about.

References

1. BBC News. Ruth Bader Ginsburg in pictures and her own words. 2020. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54218139> (accessed 17 Nov 2020).
2. BMJ. Racism in medicine. 2020. <https://www.bmj.com/racism-in-medicine> (accessed 17 Nov 2020).
3. Wikipedia. Plus ç a change. 2020. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/plus_%C3%A7a_change (accessed 17 Nov 2020).

<https://bjgpopen.org>

