

Minority ethnic older adults' narratives about COVID-19 public health campaigns

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Abstract

This study explores minority ethnic older adults' narratives about COVID-19 public health campaigns in the UK from March 2020 to the present. In this qualitative research from a multidisciplinary perspective, we aim to explore these older adults' lived experiences, thoughts, feelings, stories, and reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple national lockdowns, with a special reference to the UK National Health Service (NHS) campaigns. Surveys have shown that minority ethnic groups faced a greater risk from COVID-19 than others and such risk was said to be driven by factors such as living arrangements and jobs rather than pre-existing health conditions. This is also the group who showed lower vaccine uptake in the early stage of the UK national vaccination programmes. It is therefore critical to understand their responses and perceptions of COVID-19 public health messaging. Based on 20 tele-depth interviews and 20 online, 1-2-1 in-depth interviews, our particular focus will be on minority ethnic older adults' (N=40) responses and reflections on the use of emotions and language in NHS COVID-19 campaigns. The interview participants are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, levels of education, and employment status. Our presentation will offer preliminary findings from the interviews. Through the lens of advertising studies, psychology, and linguistics, the interview data is investigated using thematic and discourse analysis, in order to: 1) better understand how best to communicate with vulnerable groups in the society in times of crisis; and 2) to shed light on future public health message design and strategy.

Keywords: minority ethnic older adults, narratives, COVID-19 public health campaigns, UK

Biography of the presenter

Virpi Ylänné is Senior Lecturer in Language and Communication at Cardiff University, Wales, UK. Her research focuses on ageing and identity, including the representation of ageing in media contexts, and in biographical narratives. Her publications include a recently edited book *Ageing and the Media* (Policy Press, September 2022), as well as articles in various journals, including *Journal of Aging Studies* and *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*.

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