Cigarette smoking and African-Caribbean young women in the UK: Intersections of ‘race’, ethnicity, gender, class and tobacco.

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Limitations of some current research, policy and practice on health inequalities

• Does not consider ‘race’, gender and ethnicity.
• Research is often focused on ethnicity or gender and does not consider intersections of gender and ‘race’.
• Research in ethnicity and health must be undertaken which considers a range of intersections.
• Appropriate intersectionality-informed methodologies must be developed which enable more meaningful and relevant research which highlight where there may be issues of concern – e.g. maternal mortality.
Why a Study on African Caribbean Young Women and Cigarette Smoking?

- Patchy research on smoking and minoritised communities in the UK.
- Adult studies – small scale localised studies.
- General Household Surveys.
- Fewer studies on minoritised young people and cigarette smoking.
- Both quantitative and qualitative research needed.
- Analysis of both sources of data to provide a meaningful understanding of the complexities of cigarette smoking.
- Research on young women and cigarette smoking in the UK has been conducted on young white women.
Intersectional approach to researching inequalities in health: cigarette smoking

What are the patterns and influences on the cigarette smoking behaviour of African-Caribbean young women in contemporary urban Britain?

What meaning does cigarette smoking have for African-Caribbean young women?

How to develop an intersectional approach to researching this complex social phenomena?
Intersectionality-informed research methodology

Multi-method – quantitative and qualitative methodologies – convergent research design

- Survey
- Focus groups
- Integration and analysis of the two sources of data
- Intersectionality-informed - exploring the intersections of ‘race’, class and gender.
The challenge of developing intersectionality –informed social science methodologies

- Trying to develop an intersectional approach for social research presents a challenge.
- Denis (2008) comments that the practice of developing appropriate intersectional methodologies has not caught up with the theory.
- The challenge of integrating multiple, concurrent, yet often contradictory social locations into analyses of power relations.
- We need to develop effective methodological tools in order to marry theorising with necessary complex analyses of empirical data.’ (2008: 688).
Designing Intersectionality informed Research Design using Cole’s three questions

Cole (2009: 170) proposes that ‘an intersectional framework does ask researchers to examine categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage with a new lens’ and that researchers adopting an intersectional approach should ask three questions:

• Who is included within this category?
• What role does inequality play?
• Where are the similarities?

Cole (2009:172)
What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations (e.g. ‘race’/ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion).

These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g. laws, policies, state governments and other political and economic unions, religious institutions, media).

Through such processes, interdependent forms of privilege and oppression shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy are created.

(Hankivsky 2014).
Findings

• Literature on gender and smoking exploring working-class identity exists but not an exploration of gender, ethnicity and class and how this is expressed through smoking behaviour.

• My findings contribute new knowledge to understanding young people’s smoking behaviour: whilst the African-Caribbean young women in this sample were more disadvantaged than their white female peers, they were less likely to smoke.
African-Caribbean young women and cigarette smoking

- Caribbean culture, family life and religion were central to their lives and to a large extent protected many young women from cigarette smoking.

- This research demonstrates findings based on predominantly one ethno-cultural group do not necessarily translate to other groups, even if they live under similar material conditions.
Developing an intersectionality-based framework to understand health inequalities

• Health research needs to recognise the intersections between ‘race’, ethnicity, class, culture, age, sexuality, and the interlocking social locations of different communities and individuals

• Research on health behaviours should understand the social and cultural context in which those behaviours emerge and are sustained.
Finally

Thank you for listening.

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