

How can nature and culture reduce mental health inequalities among Black, ethnic minority, and refugee communities in South-West London? A multi-method study

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BACKGROUND

Black, ethnic minority, and refugee communities:

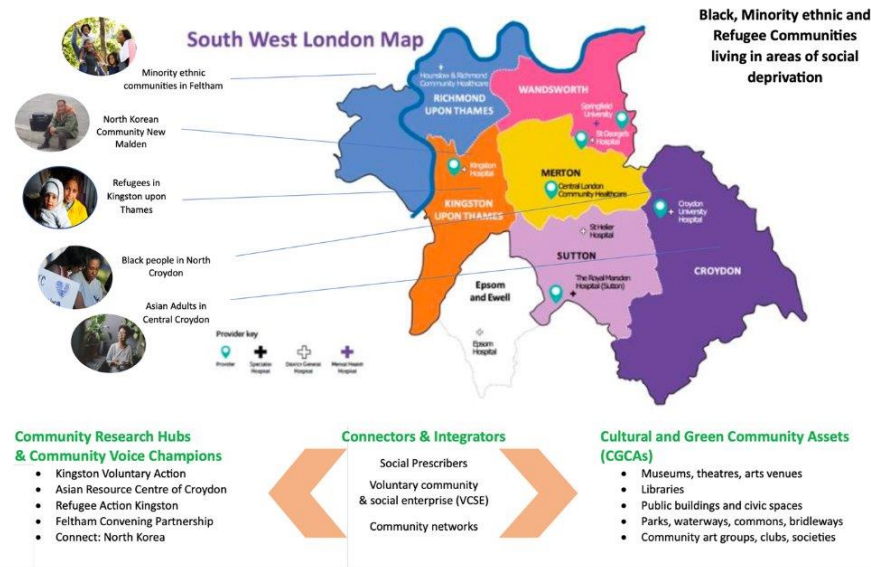
- Tend to live in unhealthy urban environments and be at greatest risk of poor mental health
- Are least likely to engage with green and cultural assets that could improve mental health

AIM

- To understand how cultural and green assets intersect with underserved communities' mental health, migrant status, values and interests, and be better integrated into social prescribing.
- Part of a larger 'Abundance' study developing and evaluating community-led ways to encourage beneficial engagement with green and cultural assets.

METHODS

- 27 volunteer community voice champions (CVCs), recruited by 5 ethnic minority refugee community organisations in SW London, participated in a cycle of collaborative lived experience workshops, focus groups, and community walks
- 13 social prescribers participated in semi-structured interviews
- Data coded and thematically analysed



RESULTS

- Personal, community and place-based sensitivities of ethnicity and mental health inequalities, intersected with green and cultural asset engagement
- Community organisations are a key source and conduit for solutions
- Key themes (CVCs): stigma and isolation, place-based community resilience, nature and culture as sanctuary for mental health, access barriers, mistrust of institutions, community connection and belonging, struggles of being a migrant and interrelated mental health issues
- Key themes (social prescribers): poor awareness of available cultural and green activities and few referrals; uncertain about suitability for clients; facilitated access to assist client take-up; benefits of placing social prescribing more in the community

CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Knowledge generated will be used to co-design, with ethnic minority and refugee community members, interventions promoting engagement with cultural and green community assets
- And to inform NHS England Core20PLUS5 local and system-level action to reduce health inequalities