

**Walsh**  
**African & British women's maternity related experiences and outcomes in Hackney**

Research questions:

- \* What are the maternity related experiences & outcomes of black African pregnant women born in Ghana, Nigeria & Somalia, who now live in Hackney?
- \* How do these experiences compare with white British pregnant women, living in Hackney?

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach, underpinned by grounded theory, to explore the range of experiences amongst four groups of women during their pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.

The first phase of the study has been a case-note review of 50 African born women and 10 white British women, who all delivered in Hackney in 2004. The second phase, currently underway, uses in-depth interviews and observations of clinical consultations. Interviews are unstructured, using a topic guide with three main areas of focus: support strategies, use of health services and maintaining health. An aspect of particular interest is the process of decision-making during the maternity experience.

*Phase 1: case-note review*

The key findings from a maternity case-note review of 50 African born women reveal a range of patterns around the use of health services eg. variation in gestational age at booking, frequency of antenatal consultations, infant feeding patterns, levels of engagement of health professionals. This case note review has contributed to the development of the sampling strategy and has informed the topic guide.

Recruitment has been challenging: the obstetric related exclusion criteria used initially has been refined as it was unnecessarily limiting access to all Nigerian, Ghanaian & Somali women. The longitudinal design has been redeveloped into a cross sectional design as women seemed reluctant to commit to more than one interview.