**Research information sheet for Focus Group Study Participants**

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**Introduction**

You are invited to participate in a focus group study *" Does lack of exposure to diverse skin types in medical teaching contribute to racial disparities in healthcare by undermining the confidence in diagnosing conditions on patients of colour?"* Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand the purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of the study. Please take your time to read the following information carefully.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary objective of this focus group study is to delve into the experiences and viewpoints of clinical medical students at UCL Medical School concerning the portrayal of diverse skin types in teaching materials. The overarching aim is to extract valuable insights that can significantly contribute to the improvement of medical education practices.

**Research project**

Background: Racial disparities in healthcare have been a pressing issue for a long time and have been observed across various specialities. Patients of colour (POC) may experience delayed diagnosis or misdiagnosis due to physicians being unable to identify their unique symptoms. This can significantly impact patient outcomes and is an issue that needs to be addressed, especially considering that the patients of colour make up a significant portion of our population. Numerous factors contribute to this issue, but a potential factor that could have a huge impact on this is the lack of teaching on diverse skin in medical student training. Despite the progress made towards inclusivity, it is crucial to recognise that there still exists a significant gap in ensuring that medical students are taught on diverse range of skin types during their education. Therefore, it is imperative that the medical teaching curriculum be updated to address this issue comprehensively to ensure that medical professionals are equipped to provide high-quality care to all patients, regardless of their skin colour or type.Top of Form

**Hypothesis Question:** Does lack of exposure to diverse skin types in medical teaching contribute to racial disparities in healthcare by undermining the confidence in diagnosing conditions on patients of colour?

**Bottom of Form**

**Aim** - Explore the diversity of teaching and presence of identified trends in UCL Medical School

**Objective** - Evaluate UCL Medical teaching, with a particular focus on dermatology.

**Method** – Conduct a focus group study to gain insights from students about their learning experiences, specifically looking into their confidence levels. This qualitative data will complement the quantitative findings from the evaluation of the medical school curriculum (which will focus on the latter).

**Why you have been chosen.**

Your voluntary participation in this study is invaluable as it contributes to the richness of your experiences. Upon agreement, you will receive a written consent form outlining the focus group study process, and you retain the right to withdraw at any point. Rest assured, any data collected will be securely stored on an UCL hard drive and subsequently erased using UCL software after the designated retention period. In addition, we strictly adhere to ethical and confidentiality protocols to ensure the utmost integrity and protection of your information. Furthermore, we are obligated to adhere strictly to GMC guidelines in conducting the focus group study and evaluation of the medical school curriculum, ensuring the prevention of harm. Your privacy and confidentiality are of utmost importance.

Through conducting this study, my aim is to provide valuable insights that can contribute to the improvement of dermatological teaching at UCL Medical School. The potential impact of these findings is significant, as they can drive positive change by cultivating a more inclusive curriculum. This, in turn, will better equip future healthcare professionals to effectively address the diverse needs of patient populations.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The decision is entirely up to you to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You have the right to withdraw at any time during the study without penalty. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect your current or future relationship with UCL. After completing the study, you will still have the option to request the withdrawal of your data if needed.

**Expectations**

By participating, you are expected to share your experiences and opinions regarding the representation of diverse skin types in medical education. Your input will be valuable in understanding the challenges and opportunities in this aspect of medical training. The focus will be on your opinions and experiences regarding this and looking at the relationship between lack of exposure and confidence when diagnosing conditions on a variety of skin types.

**Procedures**

Upon agreeing to participate, you will be invited to attend a scheduled focus group session comprising 8-10 participants. During this session, I will facilitate a discussion centring on experiences in medical education, with a specific emphasis on diverse skin representation. The exact location is pending confirmation and will be communicated shortly. The session is anticipated to conclude within a maximum duration of 2 hours. Please note that the discussions will be audio-recorded using a UCL recording device for analysis purposes and will undergo data processing for analysis.

Before we begin our discussion, it's important to note that we will adhere to GMC guidelines, ensuring that no confidential information or patient details will be disclosed. Our conversation will revolve around your opinions and experiences within the medical school, specifically focusing on the representation of diverse skin types. Here are some questions we may explore:

1. **Can you provide an overview of your overall experience with the medical school curriculum, particularly in terms of exposure to diverse skin types in teaching materials?**
2. **How would you characterize the representation of diverse skin types in your medical school curriculum, especially concerning the balance between coloured and non-coloured skin cases?**
3. **In what ways do you believe exposure to diverse skin types has impacted your learning experience throughout medical school?**
4. **Do you perceive a correlation between the lack of exposure to diverse skin types and a potential decrease in confidence when diagnosing conditions? If so, how do you think these aspects are connected?**

After the focus group study has been completed, the data will undergo processing and analysis. The recording will be transcribed, and any identifiers will be removed to ensure that anonymisation is maintained. The data will only be used for analysis, and I will only be accessing it. The recording and data will be digitally stored securely on an UCL hard drive and will be wiped off using UCL software after retention period is over. This is after the project no longer requires any data for aid.

**Risks and Benefits**

Engaging in the focus group discussions may entail the sharing of personal experiences. Despite rigorous efforts to uphold confidentiality and adhere to GDPR and ethics protocols, there exists a potential risk of unintentional disclosure. If you feel that anything has gone wrong, please contact myself or my supervisor using the email addresses provided. On the positive side, participants stand to contribute valuable insights that can significantly enhance medical education practices, particularly in maximizing the teaching on diverse skin. This, in turn, can empower clinicians to bolster their confidence in diagnosing conditions across various skin types, fostering increased exposure and ultimately contributing to advancements in public health.

**Confidentiality and Anonymisation**

Your privacy is of utmost importance. Your identity and individual responses will be safeguarded with the utmost confidentiality, abiding by the legal provisions. As part of data security measures, all audio recordings and consent forms will be securely stored on a designated UCL hard drive, employing robust measures to prevent unauthorised access. Solely, I will have exclusive access to these recordings for the explicit purpose of this research project. The digital storage of these recordings is restricted solely to the project's duration and will be wiped out using UCL software after it has been deemed no longer necessary to keep.

To further ensure anonymity and mitigate risks, a meticulous anonymisation process will be applied during the analysis phase. No personal identifiers will be incorporated into any publications or reports derived from this research. Subsequently, as part of our commitment to data protection, the information will be systematically wiped from the UCL hard drive using authorised UCL software once its necessity for the project ceases. This comprehensive approach not only adheres to legal and ethical standards but also emphasises the secure and responsible handling of your data throughout the entire research lifecycle.

**Contact Information**

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Description automatically generated with low confidenceIf you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Saujanya Kesavan at [zchas45@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:zchas45@ucl.ac.uk). If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact the UCL STS Department Manager at [sts-dm@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:sts-dm@ucl.ac.uk)