



Exploring the medicine experiences and needs of patients from under-served communities

Transcript for Rhahana

Step into Rhahana's shoes

Hi my name's Rhahana I'm forty years old. I have three children and I just finished an undergraduate degree.

Medical conditions

So I suffer from several, these consist of pancreatitis, I had gestational diabetes when I was having my children, I've had endometriosis, polycystic ovaries. I've had frank haematuria which has affected my kidneys. I've suffered reoccurring infections as well.

What medicines are you taking?

I'm approximately on about ten to fifteen different types of medicines these include: inhalers for my asthma, I've been taking medicines for pain, so this is Nefopam, which helps a lot with different types of pain I suffer from. I'm also on medication, lots of different ones, for my pancreatitis and ointments for my skin. I've had a lot of problems in terms of skin so these are to help, and some steroids as well.

Problems with medicines

I've missed and skipped medicines many times in order to just be able to function through the day. So when I used to take Creon and Nutrizyme, rather than taking them and suffering from sickness all day, I just wouldn't take them. Then I wouldn't eat and only eat when I got home and then have the medication, if I could bare it, and just be in pain during the night to avoid me not functioning through the day essentially.

Have you ever been offered an MUR?

I've never heard of one and I've never been offered one, but I assume it would be helpful because having spoken to other professionals both friends and other staff within hospitals they are usually able to give me some advice and I assume that's what that review would do. If a pharmacist was able to communicate with a patient and see what their needs were and if they were having any side effects, potentially changing it, to improve their quality of life, that would be really really helpful and useful.

Advice for pharmacy support staff

Customer service is very important and I think if staff get particular training on being warm, friendly and caring that would make a huge difference. So when I go to see my pharmacist, whether he or she are very busy and they have lots of people to see, if the staff can perhaps take down the information they need, convey it to the pharmacist, that can also save time. But also they've started to build and develop a relationship by interacting and communicating with me and getting to know who I am.

Engaging with BME communities

The first thing that I would suggest is not to have assumptions and judging people. So when we come in not to necessarily see a particular type of person, but to actually engage with them and see what they're about. So I think on general level wearing a religious attire such as this, I'm wearing the hijab. I have to work extra hard and have to emphasize my proficiency in English language for example when I'm out and about. But then we shouldn't need to do that because there shouldn't be the assumption there in the first place.

So pharmacists just need to engage and just start a conversation, firstly, with a patient and see what their needs are. If there was some sort of barrier, say for example language and their second language is English, their first perhaps Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu then perhaps getting other staff or other pharmacists who have a second language, perhaps to help them communicate and converse with that patient who has specific needs but can't communicate them in English language. I think if people can start accepting how diverse our country is and celebrating the difference and unifying on that, then we'd be able to create a better environment for everyone. And it's by talking, like when you converse with lots of different people and engage with them, then you get to know them. So if I go into my pharmacy and they ask me lots of different questions maybe lead up to, I don't mind people asking me why I wear the scarf and I can explain that this is part of my religious identity and I feel strongly about it. I want people to accept me for who I am and not necessarily what I look like on the outside.