

Bengali Women's Health Project

Annual Report : 2005 - 2006





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This has been another very successful year for the Bengali Women's Health Project.

This report gives a flavour of our activities, undertaken with the active involvement of local women. The range of work undertaken by the project would not be possible without the commitment of all our partner organisations, the dedication of community workers and volunteers and support from our funder.

This year we have mainly consolidated our work and organised more targeted work with local women. We have run an extensive programme on healthy eating based on the guidebook 'Eating for a Healthy Life', which was produced in September 2004. We have also developed a rolling programme of mental health promotion, in collaboration with our partners in Public Health.

Public Health at Camden PCT, which provides ongoing funding for the project, is now focusing their work programme on delivering public health targets identified in the recent government White Paper 'Choosing Health'. Our priority for the next year will be to align our programme with these targets.

Samina Dewan
Chair

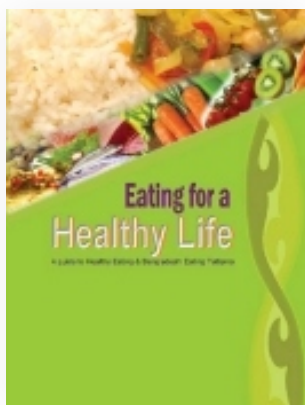
MAIN PROJECTS 2005 - 2006

Main projects and areas of work during 2005 - 2006

The Bengali Women's Health Project is a community initiative, set up to promote the health and well-being of Bangladeshi women and to improve their access to health care services.

This report outlines the main activities of the project during 2005-2006.

A. Promoting Healthy Eating in the Community



BWHP, in collaboration with Camden PCT, took the lead in the production of the guidebook 'Eating for a Healthy life: Healthy Eating and Bangladeshi Eating Patterns' in 2004.

As a part of our ongoing work promoting the guidebook in the Bangladeshi community, we organised a 'Healthy Lifestyle' program, which was run during the summer of 2005. 'Small changes can make a big difference' was the key theme of this programme, which aimed to improve local women's understanding of healthy eating and its role in maintaining and promoting good health and preventing disease. Through cooking demonstrations and 'cook and eat' sessions, participants learned how to incorporate healthy eating into their usual diet and eating patterns. At the end of the program, participants were given a copy of the guide.

During the 3-month period April June 2005, 46 sessions were organised across five community venues, and more than 70 Bangladeshi women took part. The success of this programme was celebrated with an event that brought together all the participants in the programme and certificates of attendance were given to the 53 women who attended more than 6 sessions. Local women cooked delicious healthy food for the event and it was much enjoyed by the participants which indicates their interest in and enthusiasm for healthier eating options.



The celebration event also provided an opportunity to discuss the impact of the programme on the eating behaviour of the participants. The key themes that emerged during small group discussions included:

- Participants had developed better knowledge and understanding of healthy eating recommendations, particularly the need to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables and reduce consumption of fat. However, they felt the need for ongoing support to keep up their motivation and belief in their ability to change;
- Participants felt the need for nutrition education provision for extended family members, particularly their husbands and other people who are important to them, so that a supportive environment can be created to help bring about the desired changes.

B. Encouraging women to take part in regular physical activities



BWHP continues to provide support to Chadswell Healthy Living Centre's exercise sessions for local women. These sessions are very popular among Bangladeshi women the number of women attending the sessions sometimes exceeds the capacity of the venue. However, the recent introduction of fees for these local council-run sessions has had an adverse affect on attendance.

Over the summer, BWHP also assisted Chadswell Healthy Living Centre in organising six-week taster swimming courses mainly targeting older women and women who do not tend to participate in community activities.

C. Promoting mental health and well-being

Along with our partners at Camden PCT, BWHP further strengthened mental health promotion work in the local community. Examples of work in this year include facilitating mental health awareness sessions at community venues, the production of a bilingual resource on mental health issues and providing support to the Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum.



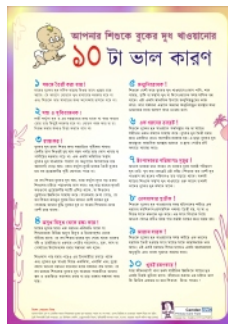
We produced a fact sheet, 'Our minds need looking after too', which gives information on the concept of positive mental health and why and how we can look after it. This fact sheet has become popular as a user-friendly resource for both community members and professionals.



This year BWHP also assisted in the Bengali translation of the two booklets 'Antidepressants and You' and 'Mental Health Services for the Bangladeshi Community in Camden'.

D. Supporting mothers in infant feeding

To take part in the campaign to raise awareness of breastfeeding, BWHP produced a bilingual leaflet, '10 Good Reasons to Breastfeed Your Baby', in May 2005.



BWHP also provided support to the Bangladeshi Infant Feeding Peer Support Programme recruiting volunteers and organising six discussion sessions that aimed to identify beliefs and practices around infant feeding in the Bangladeshi community. The findings

from these sessions will be used to develop culturally appropriate health promotion resources on infant feeding.

E. Other works

Workshops for community workers and other frontline workers:

- CVD management, treatment, rehabilitation programme by a CVD specialist nurse
- Drug awareness by New Roots

Demonstrations on baking healthy snacks and the production of recipe sheets

Health marquee at the annual Bangladesh Mela on 10th July

Supporting health awareness training event at Surma Centre

Supporting Coram Parent's Centre Gardening Project

Sessions to share health information and health promotion messages at community venues on a wide range of issues, including:

- Heart diseases and diabetes
- Personal care and hygiene
- Domestic violence
- Premenstrual and menopause issues
- Asthma, eczema and hay fever
- Drugs what parents need to know
- Herbal medicine and skin care
- Food poisoning and food hygiene



COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2005-06

Chair

Samina Dewan

Secretary

Razna Miah

Treasurer

Tasneem Khan

Steering committee members

Sofina Razzaque

Rezina Khaleque

Razia Choudhury

Hena Rahman

Maureen Brewster

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Mozeza hoque

Sandra van der Feen

Pamela Liaquat

Project doctors

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Dr. Monowara Rahman

Dr. Halima Begum Alam

Sessional workers

Shamsia Khanom

Syeda Lutfunnessa Begum

Ruchia Begum

Khairun Ali

Ruksana Begum

Nilufar Ahmed



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2005 - 2006

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