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**Cultural Myths, Superstitions, and Stigma Surrounding Dementia in a UK Bangladeshi Community****Nazmul Hussain***University of Southampton, UK*

**Statement of the Problem:** The last three Census data highlighted that UK Bangladeshi communities have the worst health outcomes. This includes a higher risk of type two diabetes and heart diseases; both are risk factors for developing vascular dementia. However, little is known about Bangladeshi community members' understandings of dementia, including cultural myths. This paper focuses on the cultural myths, superstitions, and stigma surrounding dementia in an English Bangladeshi community from the direct experiences of people living with dementia, their caregivers, and the views of dementia service providers/stakeholders.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** This qualitative research was undertaken with three distinct participant groups using semi-structured interviews (n=25), who were recruited from community settings. The first and second participant groups explored the experiences of people with dementia (n=10) and their family caregivers (n=10). The third group examined stakeholders' / service providers' views (n=5). Interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim. Findings were reached using an interpretive approach, emphasizing the sense people make in their own lives and experiences and how they frame and understand dementia.

**Findings:** The study revealed that participants with dementia and their caregivers have 'alternative' knowledge about dementia and do not necessarily understand dementia in a Westernized scientific/bio-medical context. Misconceptions about dementia and belief in various myths and superstitions can lead people to go to spiritual healers or practice traditional remedies rather than to their GPs, delaying their dementia diagnosis.

**Conclusion & Significance:** This paper concludes that there is a lack of awareness among the Bangladeshi participants and a need for targeted awareness about dementia to help dispel cultural myths and combat the stigma surrounding dementia within the Bangladeshi community. This paper concludes with policy and practice recommendations to improve the support available to people living with dementia and their careers in the Bangladeshi community that could be applicable to other minority communities..

**Biography**

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