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Addressing the under-representation of South Asian communities in genetic research
Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

As leaders in life sciences and research, Shelford trusts and our academic and industry partners are at the forefront of genetic research. A common challenge is that the vast majority of our reference genomes for genetic research are from individuals of European ancestry, despite the number of people originating from the Indian subcontinent (South Asians) comprising one-quarter of the globe's population and 5% of the UK population. Simultaneously data shows that Pakistani men have the highest rates of heart disease in the UK - yet despite this significant health burden, they are under-represented in health research.

Researchers in Manchester have undertaken a programme of work aimed at advancing our understanding of health and disease in underrepresented communities through their contribution to the [Genes and Health study](#). The study is a community based, long-term study of health and disease in British Bangladeshi and British Pakistani people. Started in 2014 by researchers at Barts Health NHS Trust in East London, it works in partnership with communities across London, Bradford and now the North West. The study has already recruited over 55,000 participants. So far, the data generated has been used to uncover important scientific discoveries including why COVID-19 affects some people more severely than others, a new treatment for a rare childhood kidney disease, and a new understanding of why people are at higher risk of developing diabetes.

A copy of the presentation by Professor Bill Newman, Professor of Translational Genomic Medicine in The Manchester Centre for Genomic Medicine at the University of Manchester and Honorary Consultant at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust can be [viewed here](#). If anyone would like to speak to the research team in Manchester please contact them on: genetics.research@mft.nhs.uk.