

Member profile for QNI Community Nursing Research Forum



Name: Prof Gina Awoko Higginbottom MBE

Job title & employing organisation: Prof Emerita Ethnicity and Community Health, University of Nottingham.

Vice-President Unite-Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA), Co-Director, International Collaboration for Community Health Nursing Research (ICCHNR)

Country of residence: England

How would you describe your current role and research interests?

My research is focused on ethnic minority populations, immigrant health, including social exclusion, equity in healthcare and ethno-cultural diversity in care giving. My 22 years as nurse, midwife and health visitor further informs my studies of international migration and maternity. I have a substantial publication record with 85+ peer reviewed articles, acting as PI for 16 externally funded national and international grants funded by NIHR, CIHR. I was formerly a Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Ethnicity and Health (renewed), a marker of research excellence held for 8 years, and a member of the NHS Race and Health Observatory Academic Reference Group and Maternity Action Group.

How did you first get involved in doing clinical research / your own research?

I completed my first research study as an undergraduate studying for my thesis that was focused on the use of a health needs assessment tool for use in health visiting practice. From that moment I was totally intrigued and passionate about research.

My first research funding was received for my Masters degree thesis from the Smith and Nephew foundation. In the third/final year of my PhD, I was also awarded a Dept of Health grant which my supervisor encouraged me to apply for. On completion of my PhD, I was able to continue research on this study. My passion for research was also fueled by the various inequities I have witnessed in health care both in respect of patients and my own family members.

What difference has your research training and experience made to your career / clinical practice / academic practice?

The impact my research training has had on my career is immeasurable. I was fortunate to acquire a National Primary Care Research Fellowship to support my PhD full time (the precursors to the NIHR Fellowships). I was the first BME nurse and health visitor to receive

this award. I am the first nurse of black and minority origin to hold a professorial role in a Russell Group university in England and the first woman of BME origin to hold a Canada Research Chair. I have had an absolutely amazing and thoroughly enjoyable research career.

What has been your favourite research experience so far?

I absolutely loved holding the Canada Research Chair, generating 10 years salary for my university and awarding additional funding for my research staff and start up grants. I also was able to support all my students graduates and post-graduates with their training costs and attending conferences. The University of Alberta where I held the Canada Research Chair is an outstanding university. I was also awarded research infrastructure startup funds by the Faculty of Nursing. The nursing programme is ranked number 1 in Canada and in the top 10 globally for nursing. The funded PhD programme was established in 1991. Every faculty member was involved in both teaching and research. Importantly, we had the opportunity to host summer-studentships for undergraduate nursing students, both home and international. Mentoring others has been a critical part of my research experience and establishing a thriving research training environment. I am a NIHR fellows' mentor.

How did you develop your research career?

I have been fortunate to develop my career through the acquisition of awards and scholarships, I would recommend anyone to apply for the available awards as you might be the recipient. Please do not exclude yourself before applying and take a look at the NIHR website.

I received the Mary Seacole Award 1997, in those days a single award, Scholar of the Smith and Nephew Foundation, National Primary Care Research Fellowship.

It is very important to identify a mentor or a sponsor I recommend taking a look at the [AdvanceHE Tool kit on sponsorship](#).

What are your top tips for anyone wanting to become a clinical academic / become more research active?

It is very important to 'position' yourself on the research landscape. Identify a topic you are passionate about and pursue that with vigour.

Where can we access your recent work?

- [Access to and interventions to improve maternity care services for immigrant women: a narrative synthesis systematic review](#). Higginbottom GMA, Evans C, Morgan M, Bharj KK, Eldridge J, Hussain B & Salt K. Health Serv Deliv Res 2020; 8(14).
- [Experience of and access to maternity care in the UK by immigrant women: synthesis systematic review](#). Gina Marie Awoko Higginbottom, Catrin Evans, Myfanwy Morgan, Kuldip Kaur Bharj, Jeanette Eldridge, Basharat Hussain. BMJ Open, Volume 9, Issue 12.
- [Optimising the activities and the products of an academic and student collaborative networks to achieve equality diversity inclusion goals in higher education](#). Sheilabye

Sobrany[^], Georgina Cox[^], Jezelle Simon Miller* Elisheba Gardener* and Gina Awoko Higginbottom (2021). Journal of Innovation and Education 7 (1) Special edition on anti-racism in higher education.

*[^] indicates faculty mentees and * under-graduate student co-authors.*

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