

U

# Beliefs and behaviours

Professor Jenny Phillimore

B

# Influences back home

- Family – especially mothers

- School

*We actually had a ‘Hygiene Teacher’, and it was a subject we studied at school. They would teach the students about the importance of personal hygiene, general hygiene, well-being and health.  
(Iranian woman)*

- Mosque and church

*Yes, my family was always very religious, so I think a lot of understating and explanation came from religion. Ha ha, some of my family members would believe that illness is God’s punishment or God’s trial (Polish woman)*

# Beliefs shaping behaviours - Lifestyle

- Diet

*Obviously number one is your diet or your food; if you eating a proper food and your diet that will help you a lot (Iraqi man)*

- Exercise

*And the person should exercise regularly and also just to have a settled mind. (Zimbabwe man)*

- Being active

- Cleanliness

- Happiness

*The first thing to have a good health and well-being in to be happy in your life (Rwanda woman)*

# Beliefs shaping behaviours

## □ Religion

*In our religion, we are told to ‘take care of our own health, and to do what is good for our health’ –  
However, life and death is in God’s hands. (Pakistan woman)*

## □ Tradition

*Sometimes people used to go to see the traditional health healer/witchcrafts and use the herbs/roots taken from some trees or plants for treating major illnesses or diseases (Somali man)*

*Khakeh Shir (an Iranian herbal medicine) and watermelon, basically things that have a cold elements are considered good for chicken pox (Iranian woman)*

# Constraints or enablers

## □ Environment

- Pollution
- Poor sanitation

*In Pakistan; it does fall down to a lack of money being the reasons as to why unhygienic conditions prevail (woman)*

- Access to fresh food

*However in India you do easily find fresh fruit and vegetables and that is why people are generally quite healthy (woman)*

## □ Money

*You need to go to Hospital if you have money. Those who don't have money, there are traditional/herbal doctors who use just Herbs to treat them (Cameroon woman)*

# Transitions

- Migration
- Age
- Secularisation

*Obviously I'm not an expert, doctor or anything but I'm' also far from leaving everything in the hand of God. (Polish woman)*

- Combining fatalism and pragmatism
- Combining old and new

*westerns will not be able to understand this (Chinese medicine). It depends, if got a cold or fever, those that must need western medicines, like medicines for fever, it will have to be western medicine, cause it is needed. Herbal drinks cannot help in that, it can only help in clear the smell in your mouth... Herbal drinks can clean up wastes in your body, it can clean those, but for a cold or fever you must need western medicines. (Chinese woman)*

# Conclusions

- ❑ Many values and beliefs support behaviours conducive to good health
- ❑ Some re-evaluation after migration
- ❑ Western AND (not OR) traditional approaches
- ❑ Public health messages might focus on ways on encouraging maintenance of values and beliefs