

Dear Sir or Madam,

In early 2019, Elsy Gomez Campos, a visionary black pharmacist with strong leadership experience in the NHS who is driven by a desire for change in the pharmacy sector, decided to bring a group of pharmacists together to create an organisation known as the UK Black Pharmacists Association (UKBPA). The mission of this organisation is to promote the interests of pharmacists, pre-registration pharmacists and pharmacy students who identify as black. So far we have created a "Leadership Board" led by Elsy as President, Bemil Odunlami as Vice President, Ora Ibanibo as Secretary and other supportive roles.

This think-tank aims to create practical solutions to the current inequalities faced by black pharmacists in the UK. These inequalities have been evident for a while now but are under documented and therefore hidden. Recently, some startling data emerged which point clearly to inequalities faced by black pharmacists:

- In 2019, the *Pharmaceutical Journal* published an article<sup>1</sup> showing that nearly half of pharmacists suspended or removed from the register over a three-year period were from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background. Of note is that the *Pharmaceutical Journal* obtained the data via the Freedom of Information route, and that the *Pharmaceutical Journal* had to make an appeal to the Information Commissioner before the data was released by the GPhC.
- In 2016, the GPhC finally carried out an investigation into why black African students have historically had a lower pre-reg pass rate relative to other ethnic groups<sup>2</sup>. According to figures from the GPhC, Black African students achieved a pass rate of 66.2%, the lowest of all the listed ethnicities. Yet, despite promises to address this, the prominent organisations in pharmacy, pharmacy training organisations and the pharmacy schools have failed to provide a tangible solution.

The data reflects a problem, which has existed for a long time, but which is under-reported. Typically, when data and reports pointing to the existence of racial discrimination within pharmacy are published, pharmacy leaders and other experts promise solutions such as an independent review or more research. However, we feel that it is important to get the views of those being discriminated against, if we are to develop tangible solutions.

The UKBPA already has over 300 members from all pharmacy sectors. The organisation will formally launch towards the end of 2019. Meanwhile we are focusing on recruiting members and gathering qualitative data about issues that affect our members at work and in Pharmacy Schools. Considering the above, we would like to work with prominent organisations to begin to provide solutions to some of the problems we have already identified. Our think-tank has already begun brain-storming tangible and realistic solutions which should yield a positive result. I trust we can count on you for support.

1. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, online, online | DOI: 10.1211/PJ.2019.20206192 <https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/news-and-analysis/news/worrying-proportion-of-minority-ethnic-pharmacists-suspended-or-struck-off-gphc-register/20206192.article>
2. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, September 2018, Vol 301, No 7917, online | DOI: 10.1211/PJ.2018.20205438 <https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/news-and-analysis/news/black-african-pharmacy-students-still-least-likely-to-pass-gphc-prereg-exam/20205438.article?firstPass=false>