002 interview

Interviewer: My name is Aniebiet Ekong, I am a student of Bournemouth University. I am from Nigeria. I am trying to explore how healthy eating advice that is offered in pregnancy, how relevant it is to black African immigrants living in the UK. I am going to ask some questions first from the questionnaire and then we will go into the interview proper. If you feel at any point that you do not want to be a part of the process, you can opt out. Its voluntary, there is no coercion at all. When the interview is done, I will send a transcript of the interview to you so that you can read and see if some of the things I captured was true or not. This interview is recorded. If you feel that you do not want it recorded anymore you can let me know. The purpose of the recording is to get a transcript of the things we have talked about today. So how old are you please… Your age please?

Response: I’m 40 years

Interviewer: So what is the highest level of education you have completed, no formal schooling, elementary/primary, secondary/high school diploma or equivalent, college degree, Bachelors degree, masters degree, doctorate degree

Response: Masters degree

Interviewer: what is your marital status? Married, divorced, civil partnership, separated, single, widowed

Response: single partnership

Interviewer: single partnership

Response; yes

Interviewer: how many children do you have

Response: 4

Interviewer: What is your country of birth

Response: Nigeria

Do not assume

Interviewer: so I assume that your nationality is Nigerian as well

Response: yes

Interviewer: so how long have you been resident in the United Kingdom, less than a year, 1-5 years, 6-9 years, 10 -14 years, 15 years and above?

Response: 15 years and above

Interviewer: do you have any existing condition that requires dietary management, so do you have diabetes, hypertension, anaemia, coeliac disease, any disease that requires dietary management?

Response: no, none of the above

Interviewer: whats your height?

Response: 5 feet 1 inch

Interviewer: What’s your most recent weight measurement?

Response: 91.4kg

Interviewer: This is the interview proper. Your information will be held confidential, so what do you understand by the term ‘being healthy’.

Response: eating healthy?

Interviewer: no being healthy

Response: oh, its eating well, errm feeling good from within, like feeling well from within, like mentally, psychologically, like from within generally.

Interviewer: ok, so what do you understand as healthy eating in your own words

Response: healthy eating is actually knowing what you actually consume, what goes in me for example preparing my own thing in my own way. Just knowing what I consume in me. The right food that I actually eat. I don’t know if I am actually

Interviewer: yes, you are making sense

Response: Like I am in charge of what goes in me, I will say that. Not just going anywhere and buying things. No I like to kind of like make it from the scratch, so that I will be able to say, this is actually what I have eaten this morning, what I have given my children. Something like that

Interviewer: that’s good, that’s really good. So would you say that your eating habit changes in pregnancy

Response: ermmm, you know that in pregnancy, we crave a lot. There are some things that you don’t normally eat that, that you want to eat during pregnancy. Well, this pregnancy I eat everything. Im sorry I try my best to eat healthy food but sometimes when I crave for something I eat it.

Interviewer: okay

Response: because I don’t have any control over it, because if I say I wont, next minute I will see one thing, after eating so much good, healthy stuff, I can actually put some veg infront of me, next thing I will see myself eating it, but I try to reduce the portion of the way I consume something that is not so healthy. Like for example cake

Interviewer: so you just mentioned cake now, so in your thoughts cake is an unhealthy food, so if you do not consume cake, that means that you are eating healthy?

Response: Ermmm, its not only cake, its not only cake. The way I make food, the things that goes in the food I make. Actually its not only cake, the reason I said cake is the kind of things we use in making cake is, when I bake cake, the kind of cake that I will bake is fattening, I don’t know how to… for myself because it's actually going to be a quick one for my children, so I will have to eat from that one. It’s the one that has the butter, sugar obviously so those things will make me, they will add, I know im not definitely eating healthy, even after eating it I feel guilty, yeah I feel guilty. So when I make food, I use less oil. You know, I I cook my spinach with, you know, like, maybe like beef with mackerel, you know what I mean, with stockfish, make it like in a minimal way you understand with reduced salts or no salts at all with less oil, ill know okay yes, I think I’ve pleased my guts. Yeah, so that’s what I mean, its not just because of cake.

Interviewer: okay so its safe to say that your eating habits changed in pregnancy because of cravings? There wasn’t any other reason?

Response: no, there was no other reason

Interviewer: okay. There was no, there was no other reason. Okay. So, this part talks about healthy eating advice/guidelines, so the National Institutes of Health and care excellence, maternal and child nutrition guidelines state that pregnant women attending anti Natal and health visitor’s appointments are given advice on how to eat healthy. Now have that in mind. So, what kind of healthy eating advice have you been offered before?

Response: I'm actually Oh, I’ve gotten a lot, when I was at my second trimester, I think the early stage of my second trimester, I was invited to the hospital. And I was actually spoken to about Eatwell. So they I was given a paper that has Eatwell guide, like, there’s a round plate that has a division of different kinds of like protein, carbs, and things, you know, they actually put them in order, of how we can actually consume them in there. And they actually advise me that I should substitute like white bread, for example, with brown bread brown rice with white,

Interviewer: brown rice with white rice

Response:yes substitute white rice with brown rice. Try and reduce the portion of the way I eat. You know things like that. And instead of you know instead of eating like the normal potato that we eat, that I should eat sweet potato instead. All those little things was what I got, yes I can actually eat every other thing. I can eat beef, I can eat chicken but I just need to be careful with my carbs like carbohydrate but the protein, protein too shouldn’t be too much but I can actually eat loads of meat, fish and all so. That was it. I got the advice at the beginning of the second trimester.

Interviewer: okay so was it just the pamphlets, did they talk to you as well?

Response: they gave me the leaflets and they spoke to me as well. I went to the clinic and they checked my weight , they checked my height. They did my BMI before they now adviced me. They checked my bp, everything. It was a formal consultation

Interviewer: okay, alright. That’s nice. So how useful was this advice to you. Was it useful at all

Response: oh yes, it was/ it was useful. I remember when I was pregnant with my son, that one. Not this pregnancy. I controlled the things that I ate but as soon as I had him, I started feasting on everything because I didn’t get that advice in pregnancy.

Interviewer: okay

Response: so I tried to control a little bit when I was pregnant but it wasn’t so much because I had chicken and chips. You know, I was just eating. By the time I had him, I continued, my weight went up and my blood pressure became a bit high. Even recently when I went they said my bp was a bit high and I started controlling it anyway., but it doesn’t require medication but its just that I should be careful, you know. So that’s it.

Interviewer: okay so was this advice relevant to you as per your culture?

Response: yeah, I think so because you know culture… yes ermmm you know regarding our own culture, most of the foods we eat can actually be fattening because of the way we cook them. So it was really really helpful. Because if I wanna make vegetable soup for instance I use palm oil and the amount of palm oil im going to put in it by the time I finish making it, its gonna be swimming on top of it so. You know all those bits, so im able to kind of reduce it. I started introducing kale into my vegetable, and instead of having rice form breakfast, I started having like cereals. And not just any kind of cereal, you know like porridge you know or wetabix. So its really good. Its really reall helpful honestly because being a Nigerian, we don’t eat cereal in the morning. I don’t know about people that have those luxuries but me for example we will drink pap and akara or moimoi. Moimoi is good as well. Infact because of the advice I did moimoi as well for myself. And I started eating lentils. You know lentils?

Interviewer: yeah

Response: so I started eating lentils, so instead of having akara, I changed it to moimoi instead. So I feel moimoi is better instead of having akara because I feel akara is going to get into oil. Like soaked in oil for a while so its really good, its really been helpful for me.

Interviewer: so was this advice relevant to you as per the social context, the social context in the sense that you are an African, that is living in the UK, so you have constructed your environment around you. You have access to your African foods. Was this advice particularly helpful to you when it came to that?

Response: I didn’t get the last bit, can you rephrase the question pls

Interviewer: you are an African living in the UK- that’s your social context. That advice that was given to you, the pamphlet and the advice- would you have preferred it if it was based on your African foods or did you just like it the way it was so you could make changes. So that’s your social context.

Response: well to be honest it does, because I don’t cook my food alone. I have my family as well, I would have loved that leaflet to have something like my African foods tailored in the same way as the English one is done so that …you understand. It really matters, it matters to me. I would have really loved if its like eating what’s it called, if I am eating my ewedu and amala, the portion that I can actually eat it with. You know things like that and it would have been more fun as well.

Interviewer: was this advice relevant to you based on your beliefs

Response: well, yeah, my belief is actually not against it so it was relevant. My belief is not against it at all

Interviewer: okay, so what do you consider important to you when choosing a meal, I have distance, time, culture, taste /personal preference, availability, and finance. So what do you consider important to you. You can pick whatever number you chose.

Response: I didn’t get you from the beginning, you said what do I consider relevant

Interviewer: what do you consider relevant when choosing a meal?

Response: to be honest, all of the things you have listed seem to be very very relevant. Obviously the taste and personal preference matters. You know the kind of food I know I have tasted before, and that I know that this is what I really like. That matters. Trying something new or something different will be like arghhh im not sure. No 1 I will be like, I don’t want anything that is going to affect my tummy, I don’t want anything that is going to affect…I eat as a family. When I cook, I cook like in general, I don’t want anything that will affect my children as well. And then financial. I think financial as well. You know, I might want to get somethings, and if I do not have sufficient funds to get it or if I do not even have money at all- lack of funds, that can actually be …you know . so its relevant.

Pause

Interviewer: so you were talking about finances as well

Response: yeah, finances can actually be another bit of it, because if I have got insufficient funds or if I have even lack of funds for example, if I want to make even the healthy options of vegetable soup and I want it to have all the sea foods, I might say I do not want to eat too much beef. We do not eat too much beef in my house but I might say I want to have seafood like ….long pause … you know if I don’t have sufficient funds, I might not be able to make it to my taste and that’s what is very important to me, you know because I wish to cook a particular thing but I do not have the particular ingredients and I will want to get. That has to do with financial bits, unless I just want to cook it anyhow which is actually not to my taste. That takes us back to taste and preference. So which other thing did you list cos I remember you mentioned quite a lot

Interviewer: culture

Response: culture matters a lot to be honest. Like some people, they cant do without eating cheese. I don’t like cheese. The only cheese I can say I like is mozzarella cheese and its like our wara. I don’t know if you know wara in Nigeria. The goat cheese wara

Interviewer: No I don’t know

Response: oh its like its gotten from cow. Its tastes exactly like the mozzarella cheese so that’s the only one that I eat. So culture matters too. I think that’s all right.

Interviewer: No, distance and time

Response: distance and time yeah, time of cooking, time of purchase and distance to go and get it is actually very very important as well. And there are some things that you really cannot buy to keep at home. You will want to eat it fresh that way. Even though we don’t really get much of that here, because you have to freeze some and bring it out to cook so you really have no choice.

Interviewer: so which one would you say is the most important to you

Response: the most important, financial

Interviewer: financial okay. So ermm what other sources of healthy eating or nutrition advice did you receive in pregnancy example social media, friends, family, internet.

Response: I have an app I downloaded. Its called bouncy, on bouncy there are loads of advices, its kind of like a day to day advice thing for pregnant women and what to expect and what to do and what not to do on bouncy. This is added with the antenatal classes, where I actually got loads of advice as well. Theres another app, baby body app as well.

Interviewer: so you didn’t get advice from friends and family and all that

Response: obviously that’s number 1. But I don’t really regard friends and family advice because no 1 im not a new mum. So ive got previous experience, it might not be fresh so I might need updating you know. But sometimes some people will say this and another person will say that and it’s a bit confusing. Like in my culture they will say don’t eat snail but you are in the western world, you are here now. Theres nothing like don’t eat snail here, we can eat snail. You understand. Its even part of what they actually require you to eat, if you can afford it in a way. So talking to some family and friends can actually make us ….

Interviewer: so apart from this don’t eat snail, did they give you any other African myth, don’t eat this or don’t eat that and did it affect what you ate in pregnancy?

Response: obviously, I am a Nigerian, I cant erase that. There is always a myth of don’t eat this or don’t eat that like don’t eat snail, don’t eat liver but those are the things that they are advising us to eat here so all those myths I didn’t follow. Because I don’t have anyone to help me, I have to do things my own way.

Interviewer: You have told me what you thought about the pamphlet -the healthy eating guide, you said it would have been better if they had put in your own foods. Yeah to make it more interesting

Response: yeah

Interviewer: so do you know the risks of unhealthy eating?

Response: yeah of course, it can actually ermmm. It can cause a lot of damage to an individual’s wellbeing physically, mentally psychologically. It can cause so much damage. Physically you can add so much weight and it can lead to obesity, then secondly ermm it can for example, it can make one, some foods can prevent you from sleeping and we don’t know. If we consume certain foods, its kind of like a stimulant. It can actually keep you awake and you wont know that’s what is keeping you awake because some people complain of inability to sleep in pregnancy and it can affect other parts, like it can affect your sight, like for example me, if I have too much oil. I feel it in my sight. I start having dizziness and I know okay ive consumed too much oil. Like recently im thinking that I need to go for eye test. I used to see better before but because of the things that I have done in the past when I didn’t know about the healthy eating, it has damaged a little bit that I think needs correction. Now I think I need glasses for just a little bit of correction of my sight. There is also hypertension, diabetes as well.

Interviewer: what do you think could stop you from eating healthy? What are the barriers to healthy eating?

Response: I will say lack of funds generally can actually make some people to eat unhealthily because its what they get that they eat. Sometimes its what they get that they eat. Sometimes its just cravings, just what the body wants at that time. And sometimes if you are not disciplined enough you wont be able to overcome its. That’s the way I see it, if you are not disciplined you wont be able to overcome it. If someone isn’t disciplined they will just say there is chicken and chips shop around the corner. When I was pregnant for my son, I ate loads of chicken and chips and it had so much salt in it. I remember one day I brought it home to share with their dad and he was like ‘what is this’ and he spat it out and he was like ‘you are eating so much salt’, and I didn’t feel anything like salt because I was just enjoying it, it was when I had my son, then I went to buy it for my daughter and my daughter enjoys It, and I tasted it again. It had another taste cos then I had given birth to my son. I now got the taste right like oh my God, ive been consuming so much salt. So cravings, lack of discipline and lack of funds or insufficient funds or just because they have got no choice. It is what they see or what they have. And they don’t have anyone around them. Sometimes during pregnancy you might feel like eating something and you cant make it because if you make it you might not be able to eat it. You know that type of feeling, so I will finish cooking and I wont be able to eat that food because of all the stress I have gone through, I would have lost that appetite

Interviewer: so you were trying to say that, not having people around as well, how does that affect you?

Response: ofcourse it affects me, ermm, there are family and friends here. There are some people that will acytually cpme and help you. They will be there, if it was Africa you will have people there cooking and helping you. I have had people during this pregnancy here that will just cook for me, one of my friends, she is actually a midwife, she is actually one of the ones that cooks healthy foods for me. She made sure I ate very good food, less salt and everything. Less oil, pepper soup. She mad everything really good for me. So but you don’t get it everytime. That’s why I said when there is no one around and you want to do something, can be a real barrier. And during the lockdown, I was getting help once in a while when there was no lockdown, but as soon as lockdown started . I had to get up and make something and im trying my best not to eat anything bad. Covid 19 lockdown has been a major barrier for me in this pregnancy.

Interviewer: so ermm you talked about lack of funds, the government talks about the healthy start vouchers, do pregnant women receive the healthy start vouchers and how useful is it to you when you are talking about lack of funds.

Response: okay, there it goes, talking about the healthy start vouchers, its not all pregnant women that qualifies to receive the vouchers

Interviewer: okay

Response: No 1, you have to be earning certain benefits to be able to get the vouchers. I have no recourse to public funds so I didn’t get it

Interviewer: okay

Response: if you have no recourse to public funds, you cannot get any benefits, people that actually get certain benefits like income support, job seekers can actually get it, those are the ones entitled to get it. Pregnant women do get it, I know some people who got it

Interviewer: African women?

Response: yeah African women, because they are on certain benefits but I didn’t get it

Interviewer: so what do you thing would encourage you to eat healthy, what are those things

Response: okay, well to be honest, I want feel good about myself, I want to look good, I want to live long, I don’t want to die in my prime. According to our saying in my country…I want to be the mother of my children. Those are the things that encourages me to eat healthy. I just don’t want to eat anything that goes on a plate. I want to eat healthy because of my children, I want to dress up and feel good about myself. I want to be able to move freely without having any health issues. Those are the things I always put into consideration and to be honest we always have to compromise because of child bearing. Ive actually been on this ermm dietary control since when I was in Nigeria, you know some people will take malt, some people wil drink coke. I don’t. till this very moment I don’t drink malt and I don’t drink coke cos ive got this tendency of going on the fat side. Im not a slim person, if you can see me. yeah. So ive actually, before I got into the country I was a size 12/10 but when I started having children, my weight started increasing, im not a tall person as well. My BMI does not permit all that so, I have been monitoring all those things. Ive got my parents as well. My dad is diabetic and my mum is hypertensive. So my dad keeps warning us to be careful of our sugar intake. He was actually the one that told me that you can get diabetes not only from sugar alone. Actually there are some things you eat that has got sugar, so you need to be careful the way you eat it and my mum is hypertensive. She is not a slim person as well, I know now in her old age, shes got problems with her legs, her knees. You know all those things I do not want. Im trying my best, its not easy. We are all humans. Its also knowing yourself, knowing myself encourages me to actually to eat well.

Interviewer: really interesting. Would you like to say any other thing

Response: thank you for organising this, I like to do things that reminds me of my wellbeing