Interviewer: How do you offer healthy eating advice to pregnant women

Response: Its usually started at the booking appointment, where the midwife will go through the generic information that we have given out. For me, I work in maternal medicine so we don’t receive them at specific points during pregnancy. I get to spend time with them, around the 28th weeks. We sort of go through the diets. You know, healthy eating and things like that

Interviewer: So how do you offer the healthy eating advice, is it pamphlet or spoken words ?

Response: its usually just with me spoken words. I get to ask if they are eating. If they are having a balanced diet and the sort of things and generally like that. I know that for as a professional clinic we offer weight management and things like that. Leaflets are given out. We do have leaflets, sometimes some of the ladies do say to me oh we were given a leaflet at booking, we were given a leaflet during one of the other appointments. I cant say if I religiously give out leaflets, I just basically chat with them

Interviewer: So when you do, do they have an understanding of what a healthy diet looks like?

Response: Not always to be honest, I do find a lot of them when I say what kind of things they eat. A lot of them eat lots of rice, lots of sort of high carbs diets really is what im told.

Interviewer: So these are pregnant women in general?

Response: yeah, they do say that they eat lots of fruits but they do tend to sort of, what I personally find with them is that when you do discuss it and they say they eat this and this and you say oooh how about you know rotating it with a few more vegetables, fruits and things. Very often they will go from one extreme to another. So they are cutting out one thing but they eat all panic of strawberries and grapes you know what I mean and I do find that they will go from one extreme to the other so its really just about sort of educating them on balance really

Interviewer: Okay. So have you ever offered healthy eating advice to pregnant Africans?

Response: Yes, that tends to be generically with all of the women. Its sort of something that we all generally do

Interviewer: okay. Do you use a different approach when offering healthy eating advice to pregnant Africans. Is it the same generic advice for everyone?

Response : You sort of raise it and then tweak it depending on what they tell you. I cant say really unless they tell me something. I don’t sort of differentiate between Africans and the white British ladies you know about their diet as such. You know I get a lot of sickle cell, thalassaemia, HIV ladies you know and they tend to be sort of honest anyway with their medical conditions so we generally go in the logical sort of way that we chat about it. It just sort of flows, we just sort of hone it on it literally.

Interviewer: lets say you are talking about food generally, Do the ladies talk about the difference in foods?

Response: They don’t generally, a lot of them will talk about yams and lots of plantain and root vegetables that they tend to eat but me personally when I see them it generally just sort of flows in because I generally start off with the medical condition and then the medications and then it sort of slows into how you diet and what are the things you eat, are you happy with it. And obviously we look at the blood results and you know sort of take all of that into account. Does that sort of make sense

Interviewer: yes it does. Have you seen a copy of the eatwell guide and the pregnancy healthy eating guidelines.

Response: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you think it is appropriate to all cultures?

Response: if I say possibly not, you are gonna ask me why. You probably know more about that than I do. You know the sort of African ladies and what’s best for them, the sort of foods that they should be eating more of. Do you know?

Interviewer: No, No, its not like there is any specific food that they should be eating more of but we tend to get the fact that African ladies stick to their own cultural food except maybe add a few more fruits and veggies. Its not like African food in itself is unhealthy but the method of preparation so im trying to find out if we could probably do more of an education thing to see that

Response: I think probably yes because what I personally find is that a lot more ladies of African origin are more laid back in their approach to things. You know what I mean, so you can say these things to them and they are very sort of yes, yes, yes but like you say when they leave the room are they actually doing or are they just reverting back to what they used to do. Unless they tell us, we don’t actually know but you know now you have raised that, that’s something that I will probably talk a little bit more about. It is a lot different at the minute because of the pandemic, a lot of it is over the phone and sometimes you get a very different, sometimes they can say one thing and they are meaning another and their reactions but over the phone its difficult to always pick up on that with their sort of laid back kind of approach. I think it’s different culturally and not just culturally, it’s the age and the generation in various things. They have very different approaches. I think a lot of it, with the laid-back thing, it is quite a cultural thing really, you know they seem a bit calmer and slower and maybe its more of an educational thing. Maybe doing a specific information thing for them, maybe will probably not be a bad idea. You know, because it’s the same leaflets that we give to all different cultures and languages and things like that, but you don’t know if there is one, is there for Africans

Interviewer: No

Response: and maybe if there was one, they would probably take more notice of it because it would be for them, do you know what I mean

Interviewer: yeah, I understand what you mean

Response: So, I think maybe I would certainly utilise one if there was one

Interviewer: Do you think that the pregnancy healthy eating guidelines is appropriate to all

Response: probably not

Interviewer: so, I wanted to ask, is it appropriate to all social contexts? So you have a lot of people whose income level isn’t just the same or appropriate for all religions

Response: I don’t really know how to answer that, because like you said, you can say all you need to say like change your diet or this is what is helpful but then if they then financially cannot afford it, then where do you go from there really. Especially now the way things are in the pandemic because you know there were a lot of people that were going to foodbanks and things like that so its just a very difficult sort of answer to give directly. Do you understand that sort of where I’m coming from

Interviewer: Yes, I do, I realise some of these questions are sort of trigger points, to kind of make you think

Response: Yeah, yes they are. That’s what you have made me do and I know that from now on I will be talking to the consultant who is African and she is religious about these diets. She will be a good person to speak to because she deals with the diabetics, she deals with the medical ones but shes a doctor so I will definitely be talking to her about it just to get a different perspective.

Interviewer: So do you think that language is a barrier when it comes to speaking with African women?

Response: I don’t personally find it as a barrier, I don’t think I find it as a barrier specifically

Interviewer: Do you have any other thing to say?

Response: No not really but I will relay this back, I will be discussing it with the consultant because I find it quite interesting to think about really. Its just raising the sort of you know awareness but also for us as midwives to think about it a little bit more because what you have done now is sort of make me think more about it rather than having it just generic and if there is anything I will email it to you.