Understanding and solving the diversity crisis in Clinical Psychology selection

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(Former Director – Oxford Clinical Psychology Course
Past Chair - Clearing House Management Board
Past Director DCP Professional Standards Unit)

Twitter @ClinPsychDavid

#DiversifyClinPsy

Inclusion means that people from diverse backgrounds feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued.
Aspects of diversity

Equality Act (2010) protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

(Not currently monitored by Clearing House)

Other diversity characteristics:

- Social class
- Economic wealth
- Geographic region
- Family background – care leaver
- Refugee status
- Carer
- etc

Representation

Proportion of applicants from a specific social/demographic group

Proportion of population from that specific group within age band + region
Stages of under-representation in clinical psychology training

- Study Psychology Degree
- Attain 2:1/1st
- Would like to pursue clinical psychology
- Undertake voluntary experience
- Undertake paid experience
- Submit application
- Shortlisted
- Accepted

Population

Conversion course

N= ~20,000 per annum
N=~14,500 per annum
N=4054 in 2019
N=614 in 2019

Gender

All A level students:
- Male – 44%
- Female – 66%

Psychology A level students:
- Male – 24%
- Female – 76%

Psychology Undergraduates:
- Male – 19%
- Female – 81%

Clinical Psychology Applicants + Trainees:
- Male – 16%
- Female – 84%

2nd largest gender bias of all degree subjects

Data: ONS, Joint Qualifications Council, HESA, Clearing House (2016-18 Intakes)
Stages of under-representation in clinical psychology training

- Population
  - Men & young people from low participation areas
  - ? disability

- Study Psychology Degree
  - N= ~20,000 per annum

- Attain 2:1/1st
  - N= ~14,500 per annum

- Would like to pursue clinical psychology

- Undertake voluntary experience

- Undertake paid experience

- Submit application
  - N=3866 in 2018
  - N=594 in 2018

- Shortlisted

- Accepted

Ethnicity

UK Population (16-24 yrs of age)
ONS (2011)

- White British, 76.58%
- White Other, 5.10%
- Mixed, 3.30%
- Black, 3.84%
- Asian, 9.93%
- Other, 1.25%

BME=15%
(inc Mixed = 18.32%)
UK Psychology graduates 2011-2015

BME = 17.2%

White, 73.3%
Black, 5.0%
Asian, 8.1%
Other, 4.1%
Unknown, 9.5%

Data source: HESA (available on Clearing House Website)
Clinical Psychology Applicants 2016-2018

Overall BME = 14%
(Incl Mixed = 20.34%)

However, note that % “White-Other” applicants is sig greater than in general population (5%)

Probability of applying for Clinical Psychology
(relative to total population)
(ONS/Clearing House Data)
The belief that people from black and ethnic minority groups are less likely to apply for Clinical Psychology Courses is a myth.
Clearing House Applications 2011-19

15% or 1 in 6

Acceptance rates
(Clearing House 2016-18 entry)
Applications from White British applicants are **twice** as likely to be successful as those from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and **three times** as likely as those from Black applicants.
Interview success rate by ethnic group
(2016-2018 entry)

Probability of being shortlisted for interview
(Clearing House Data: 2016-18 intakes)

1 in 5 White British applicants were shortlisted for interview
1 in 9 Asian applicants were shortlisted for interview
1 in 13 Black applicants were shortlisted for interview

Data source: Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology (2016-2018 Intakes)

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But it must be getting better, isn’t it?
Acceptance rate of BME applicants relative to White British applicants

Data - Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology

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Pre-interview testing

Shortlisting rates - Courses using pre-selection tests vs form-only courses

- Test courses White British
- Test courses BME

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• The disparity in shortlisting rates for applicants from different ethnic backgrounds is **at least as large** for courses using pre-selection tests and there is some evidence to suggest it is actually larger than for those courses relying on the application form alone.

• Therefore, it seems clear that the use of pre-selection tests **does not result in increased ethnic diversity**.
Socio-economic advantage

- High performing school
- High A level grades
- High tariff university
- Degree class
- Masters degree £10k + Lost earnings
- Voluntary experience
- Assistant Psychologist post

Clinical Psychology Acceptance Rates 2016-18 by Ethnic Group & Household Income

Data: Dept of Work & Pensions (Households below Average Income: 1994/95 to 2013/14) & Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology
Disadvantage

- Less well performing school
- Lower A level grades
- "New" university
- Lower degree class
- Paid work e.g. care asst
- Less likely to have Clin Psych referee

Percentage of pupils attaining AAB or higher at A Level by school in England

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Disadvantaged students at top universities
Proportion of 18 year olds in England with a place at a higher tariff university, by UCAS' multiple equality measure
Boyle et al (1993) found that ethnic minorities were under-represented in assistant posts, suggesting that courses would introduce an undesirable bias into selection if they over-valued the assistant role.

If your course is using non-contextualized A level results or type of university attended in addition to degree result in your admissions process then:

Not only are you not promoting inclusion you are **actively working against it** and potentially **undoing** the work of universities’ increasing access programmes (possibly even your own!)
Looking hard – in the wrong direction

- Much of our current focus is looking backwards at attainment but our task is to identify potential to become an excellent clinical psychologist.

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Contextual admissions
Promoting fairness and rethinking merit

The Office for Students is challenging universities and colleges to be ambitious and innovative in reducing persistent inequalities in access and participation. Contextual admissions are one way of doing this, but a more radical approach is needed if we are to achieve fair access. What might ‘ambitious and innovative’ look like in this area and how far do we need to go to achieve fair access?

Potential indicators of disadvantage

**Area**
- POLAR4
- ACORN
- Index of Multiple Deprivation

**School**
- State v Selective Performance rank
- Av. UCAS Points

**Household/Individual**
- Means tested benefits
- Free School Meals
- Care leaver
- Refugee
- Carer
- First generation to attend university

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**Table 3: How contextual indicators are used to inform admissions decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University name</th>
<th>No info given to applicants in general</th>
<th>Applicants may receive additional consideration for an offer</th>
<th>Prioritised for interview</th>
<th>Prioritised for standard offer</th>
<th>One grade reduction in standard entry requirements</th>
<th>Two or more grade reduction in standard entry requirements</th>
<th>Prioritised for acceptance as normal mass at confirmation</th>
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</table>

* participants in widening participation scheme only

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Boliver, V. et al (2017)
Imagine you’re asked to review two application forms. Here’s the key information for each applicant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>A-LEVEL RESULTS</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>WORK EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>2:1, King’s College London</td>
<td>Has legal work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy</td>
<td>BBB</td>
<td>1st, Manchester Metropolitan</td>
<td>No legal work experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which candidate would you hire? On the face of it Jonathan may appear to be the stronger candidate, but let’s add some supplementary information that puts Katy’s achievements in context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>A-LEVEL RESULTS</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>WORK EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>SCHOOL’S AVERAGE A-LEVEL RESULT</th>
<th>POSTCODE OF CHILDHOOD HOME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>2:1, King’s College London</td>
<td>Has legal work experience</td>
<td>AAA*</td>
<td>Neighbourhood one of the least deprived in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy</td>
<td>BBB</td>
<td>1st, Manchester Metropolitan</td>
<td>No legal work experience</td>
<td>DDC</td>
<td>Neighbourhood one of the most deprived in the country</td>
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</table>

Has this changed your opinion of who might be the better candidate?
Rare contextual recruitment system

- Adopted 87% of UK’s top law firms
- 27% of trainees now have flag
- 6% of trainees are only brought to interview because of contextual flags

Flag system
- Care leaver
- Bottom 40% school
- FSM
- 1\textsuperscript{st} gen - only in conjunction with low POLAR postcode
- \textbf{No} use of POLAR alone
- \textbf{No} use of ethnicity alone

Five recommendations for Action

1. \textbf{Stop} making the problem even worse by using uncontextualized A level results or university attended in shortlisting, remove these from the application form.

2. \textbf{Don’t} rely on the use pre-selection tests or outreach/mentoring schemes alone to increase diversity. \textit{They won’t}.

3. \textbf{Include meaningful contextual information} in the Clearing House application form e.g. Free school meals recipient, family income support, care-leaver/refugee status, first generation, secondary school performance, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

4. \textbf{Use it} proactively as part of a fairer, more holistic, shortlisting process.

5. \textbf{Provide} appropriate support & mentoring before & after selection.