



60 Seconds with Shaji, Volunteer



Shaji has volunteered as a **Patient Research Champion** with the Stroke research team at Newham Hospital since September 2019, promoting research and helping to educate the public about the importance of taking part in research. He attended the National PPIE PPAG meeting at which various methods to promote research in public were discussed and concerns raised were answered and ways to further educate and raise awareness and importance were taken on board. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, he has also represented Barts Health Patient Research Champions at the National Institute Health Research (NIHR) Research Champions catch ups and the other with the Barts Health

COVID-19 research PPIE advisory group.

Why did you get involved? What motivated you?

I have experience of working with a community organisation and over the years I found that research and development is given less importance. With regards to the current pandemic; the general population knows this is a new disease and that there isn't a vaccine or drugs available in the market. This made me actively participate in getting any genuine information on COVID studies that I can pass on to my local contacts and groups I'm involved in, with my aim being to further promote awareness and research interests.

What benefits do you think you personally received? Also, any negative experiences?

I have become more confident in educating whoever I come across, on the importance of research and how it is going to benefit future generations. Being part of meetings and reading available materials related to current studies had become a routine. A few negative experiences and conspiracy theories are circulating and I take this as an opportunity to ask questions in the meetings and relay answers to others, providing facts and figures.

What benefits do you think COVID-19 research will bring to patients in the future? Also, any perceived negative impacts?

Our planet is waiting for the wonder drug which is going to be the biggest scientific and medical invention of the century. Waiting time for completion of trials and positive results may take some time and until then, controlling the spread is the responsibility of each individual. Also there are economic impacts which have to be tackled.

If you had to list some positive things that came out of your experience of being involved in COVID-19 research - what would they be and why?

Personally, I became more active and dynamic. My reading, listening and debating skills have gone up from self-education and involvement in COVID -19 research activities, which enable me to educate the public on research.

In a nutshell how has being involved in COVID-19 research development activities had a positive experience on your life? It has given me a positive attitude towards the future.