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Section: Community participation in planning

**Abstract (300 words):**

**Engaging vulnerable road users in the planning process: a case study of zebra crossings**

**Background:** In the UK, zebra crossings provide an alternative to uncontrolled crossings and are more economical than signalised crossings. However, the use of Zebra crossings may be problematic for some groups, especially people with disabilities. Methods for fully exploring and understanding their experiences and perceptions of their interactions with public spaces have not been well researched.

**Aim:** To explore how reasonable adjustments could be made to zebra crossings to ensure they meet the needs of individuals with protected characteristics.

**Methods:***Stage 1: qualitative study.* Five focus groups, each with a different representative group. This included individuals who were: aged 65 and over, visually impaired or blind, hearing impaired or deaf, had a physical disabiliti(es), and/or had a cognitively disabiliti(es). Participants were recruited via relevant charities and third sector organisations. Each focus group was specifically designed and delivered to enable full participation by participants. For example, in the focus group for deaf people and individuals with hearing impairment, a researcher fluent in British sign language facilitated the session and English/BSL interpretation with captioning was also provided.

*Stage 2: Observational study.* Participants which involved individuals from four of the five representative groups (all except the cognitive impairment group) The observational study took place at zebra crossings across the City of Edinburgh. These crossings had been identified for suitability and risk assessed prior to being used in the study.  Participants were accompanied and recorded by a researcher on approaching the zebra crossing, whilst crossing, and on moving away from the crossing.

**Conclusion:** This study outlines ways in which to include disability groups in transport planning research. Group members were highly engaged and willing to participate in research that benefits them and how they interact with public spaces.

**Keywords (4):** Zebra crossing, transport planning, accessibility, qualitative methods