

UK census reveals stark divide in health of nation

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Researchers at The University of Manchester have shown how ethnic minority groups in England and Wales have been consistently more unhealthy than the majority White population.

Analysing Census data from over two decades, the team find Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have long term [illness](#) rates which are 10 per cent higher than their White counterparts.

2011 figures reveal that White Gypsy or Irish Traveller men and women are most likely of all [ethnic groups](#) to be ill, and endure twice the White British rates at all ages.

The Chinese group, however, reported persistently better health in the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Censuses at half or under half the White illness rates for both [men and women](#).

Ethnic [health inequalities](#) in London in 2011 were more severe than elsewhere in England and Wales, report the team based at the University's Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE). The research was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The researchers focused on the Census question on limiting long-term illness, which was asked in all three Census years of 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Dr Laia Becares, who led the research, said: "Many factors cause poor

health such as age, sex and hereditary factors.

"But education, social position, income, local environment, and experiences of racism and racial discrimination are much more important and adjustable through public policy.

"This helps us to understand why, as our research shows, different ethnic groups have very different - and in most cases worse - levels of ill health."

Also according to the team, ethnic health inequalities for older people are substantially greater: 56% of all women aged 65 or older in England and Wales reported a limiting long-term illness, but over 70% of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White Gypsy or Irish Traveller women at this age were ill.

There are also clear regional health inequalities – ethnic inequalities in London are larger than outside London.

More information: The briefing 'Which ethnic groups have the poorest health? Ethnic health inequalities 1991 to 2011' is available at: www.ethnicity.ac.uk/

Provided by University of Manchester

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