

# Ethnic minorities in Scotland have longer life expectancy

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People living in Scotland who describe themselves as being of an ethnic minority have a longer life expectancy than those describing themselves as White Scottish, according to new research led by the University of St

Andrews.

The Scottish Health and Ethnicity Linkage study, published in *Revue Quetelet Journal*, examined how different ethnic groups reported health contrasted with actual mortality rates for the same groups by anonymously linking Scottish Census 2001 data for 4.6 million people to mortality records.

The study found that it is not just younger individuals who expect to live longer, but ethnic minorities who live up to the age of 65 also expect to have a longer life than older people who identity as White Scottish individuals.

However, despite having a [longer life](#) expectancy, not all ethnic minorities live longer in [good health](#), with Indian and Pakistani populations having amongst the longest life expectancies in Scotland but also the highest number of years with poor health.

For example, Pakistani women are expected to live 20.4 years in poor health on average compared to 8.7 years for White Scottish women.

High risk for specific diseases (such as diabetes) could be part of the explanation for this high number of years in [poor health](#).

The [information](#) was collected by using information from the Census on self-assessed health, self-declared ethnicity and sex and found that males and females of the categories Other White British, Other White, Chinese origin and Indian males had longer healthy life expectances than those who categorized themselves as White Scottish.

Author of the study Dr. Genevieve Cezard, of the School of Geography and Sustainable Development at the University of St Andrews, said:  
"Policy makers should aim to improve the quality of life of Pakistani

and Indian populations in Scotland and ensure that fair and culturally-adapted care is provided in primary and secondary settings while the root causes of this paradox are pinpointed and better understood.

"Further research should investigate the underlying mechanisms of the morbidity-mortality contrast observed and aim for a better characterisation of the diseases that drive a morbidity disadvantage but do not necessarily lead to worse survival rates."

**More information:** Genevieve I Cezard. Evidencing the gap between health expectancy and life expectancy for ethnic groups in Scotland. *Quetelet Journal* (2020). [DOI: 10.14428/rqj2019.07.01.05](https://doi.org/10.14428/rqj2019.07.01.05)

Provided by University of St Andrews

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