

England minorities: Higher COVID-19 cases, fewer vaccinated

February 25 2021, by Danica Kirka



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson meets with Year 11 students in the canteen during a visit to Accrington Academy in Accrington, England, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, as they prepare for the return of all pupils on March 8. (Anthony Devlin/Pool Photo via AP)

England's ethnic minority communities have higher levels of COVID-19

infections and lower levels of vaccine acceptance than other groups, according to a new study that highlights how the pandemic is worsening health inequalities.

The study found that 92% of people across England either have received or would accept a [vaccine](#). But that figure dropped to 87.6% for Asians and 72.5% for Blacks, according to the study released Thursday by Imperial College London.

Researchers also found that most people of all age groups produced disease-fighting [antibodies](#) after two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Fewer people tested positive for antibodies after a single dose, with the proportion falling to 34.7% for those 80 and over.

Professor Helen Ward, lead author of the report, said it was "encouraging" to see high levels of vaccine confidence and antibody response, while cautioning that the study didn't assess the effectiveness of the vaccine.

"Our findings suggest that it is very important for people to take up the second dose when it is offered," she said. "We know that some groups have concerns about the vaccine, including some people at increased risk from COVID-19, so it is really important that they have opportunities to discuss these and find out more."



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson meets with Year 11 students in the canteen during a visit to Accrington Academy in Accrington, England, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, as they prepare for the return of all pupils on March 8. (Anthony Devlin/Pool Photo via AP)



A woman wears protective face coverings as she passes the shutters of a closed shop in West Ealing in London, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021. It has been announced that further testing of residents in the London Borough of Ealing will be carried out after additional cases of the coronavirus variant first identified in South Africa were detected. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, elbow bumps a Sixth form student during a visit to Accrington Academy in Accrington, England, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 as they prepare for the return of all pupils on March 8, (Anthony Devlin/Pool Photo via AP)



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, background centre left, meets Sixth form students during a visit to Accrington Academy in Accrington, England, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 as they prepare for the return of all pupils on March 8, (Anthony Devlin/Pool Photo via AP)

The findings are based on a study of more than 154,000 people who tested themselves between Jan. 26 and Feb. 8 using a home finger prick test. Participants also answered questions about their willingness to be vaccinated.

The study found that 13.9% of the population had antibodies either from infection or vaccination. Antibody prevalence in unvaccinated individuals was highest among Blacks, 22.1%, and Asians, 20%.

Rokhsana Fiaz, mayor of the London borough of Newham, said issues surrounding poverty, unequal access to [health care](#) and the concerns of ethnic minorities were well known at the start of the pandemic and should have been factored into the mass vaccination program from the beginning.

While the British government has so far focused on large-scale vaccination sites, Fiaz called for a "hyper-local" strategy to reach more people. Newham, a borough where Black, Asian and other [minority communities](#) make up 72% of the population, is now having trials offering vaccinations through local pharmacies and [religious groups](#), she said.

"In order to address the challenges and the risks for communities from certain minority ethnic groups, we've got to address those fundamental issues of deprivation, inequality and poverty," Diaz told the BBC. "And we've got to be able to address issues of health inequity that have been long-standing features in this country."

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