

# Health inequalities among ethnic groups have increased since pandemic, evidence shows

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Existing health disparities amongst ethnic minorities with diabetes have worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new study published in the journal *Diabetes Care* has reported.

Academics from the University of Leicester are urging care services to address the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on people from ethnic [minority](#) backgrounds after highlighting an increase in health inequalities.

In this [review](#), the team of researchers from the UK and US examined the larger structural barriers in society that put ethnic minorities with diabetes at greater risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes.

These barriers include structural inequities in adequate housing, food, education, employment opportunities, and neighborhood resources.

According to this extensive review, these barriers are important determinants of health for people with diabetes or COVID-19, particularly those in high-risk populations such as ethnic minorities.

The academics found that people from ethnic minority backgrounds can experience severe coronavirus outcomes because of their differences in comorbid conditions (the presence of one or more additional conditions often co-occurring with a primary condition), exposure risk and access to treatment.

Previous academic studies have failed to address wider structural issues that can trigger health inequalities amongst people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The research was supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East Midlands and NIHR Leicester Biomedical Research Centre.

Professor Kamlesh Khunti CBE, Director of NIHR ARC East Midlands and the Real World Evidence Unit and Professor of Primary Care Diabetes and Vascular Medicine at the University of Leicester, lead

author of the review, says that "[diabetes](#) is a risk factor for severe COVID-19, and the combination of these ethnic disparities may have contributed to the inequality of coronavirus outcomes for those living with the condition."

"As we now plan for recovery, improved surveillance, and risk factor management, it will be imperative that primary and specialist care services urgently focus on the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on ethnic minority populations."

"Only by taking a long-term, holistic view of health care will we, and particularly our most vulnerable populations, be able to cope better with future pandemics."

**More information:** Kamlesh Khunti et al, The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Ethnic Minority Groups With Diabetes, *Diabetes Care* (2022). [DOI: 10.2337/dc21-2495](https://doi.org/10.2337/dc21-2495)

Provided by University of Leicester

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