

Risk of long COVID higher for people living in most deprived areas, finds new research

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New research has found that the risk of long COVID is strongly associated with area-level deprivation, with the odds of having long COVID 46% higher for people from the most deprived areas, compared

to those in the least deprived areas.

Published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, the study analyzed over 200,000 working-age adults and is the first to quantify the association between long COVID and [socioeconomic status](#) across a range of occupation sectors.

Analyzing data from the Office for National Statistics COVID-19 Infection Survey, the researchers found that females had a higher risk of long COVID, with the risk of long COVID in females in the least deprived areas comparable to that in males in the most deprived areas.

People living in the most deprived areas and working in the healthcare and education sectors had the highest risk of long COVID compared to the least deprived areas. There was no significant association between the risk of long COVID and the most and least deprived areas for people working in the manufacturing and construction sectors.

Lead researcher Dr. Nazrul Islam, of the Nuffield Department of Population Health at the University of Oxford, and Faculty of Medicine at the University of Southampton, said, "Although certain occupational groups, especially frontline and essential workers, have been unequally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, studies on long COVID and occupation are sparse.

"Our findings are consistent with pre-pandemic research on other [health conditions](#), suggesting that workers with lower socioeconomic status have poorer health outcomes and higher premature mortality than those with higher socioeconomic position but a similar occupation. However, the socioeconomic inequality may vary considerably by occupation groups."

According to the researchers, the study indicates the need for a diverse

range of public health interventions after recovery from COVID-19 across multiple intersecting social dimensions. Future health policy recommendations, they say, should incorporate the multiple dimensions of inequality, such as sex, deprivation and occupation when considering the treatment and management of long COVID.

Dr. Islam added, "The inequalities shown in this study show that such an approach can provide more precise identification of risks and be relevant to other diseases and beyond the pandemic."

"These findings will help inform [health policy](#) in identifying the most vulnerable sub-groups of populations so that more focused efforts are given, and proportional allocation of resources are implemented, to facilitate the reduction of health inequalities."

More information: Socioeconomic inequalities of long COVID: a retrospective population-based cohort study in the United Kingdom, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/01410768231168377](#)

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