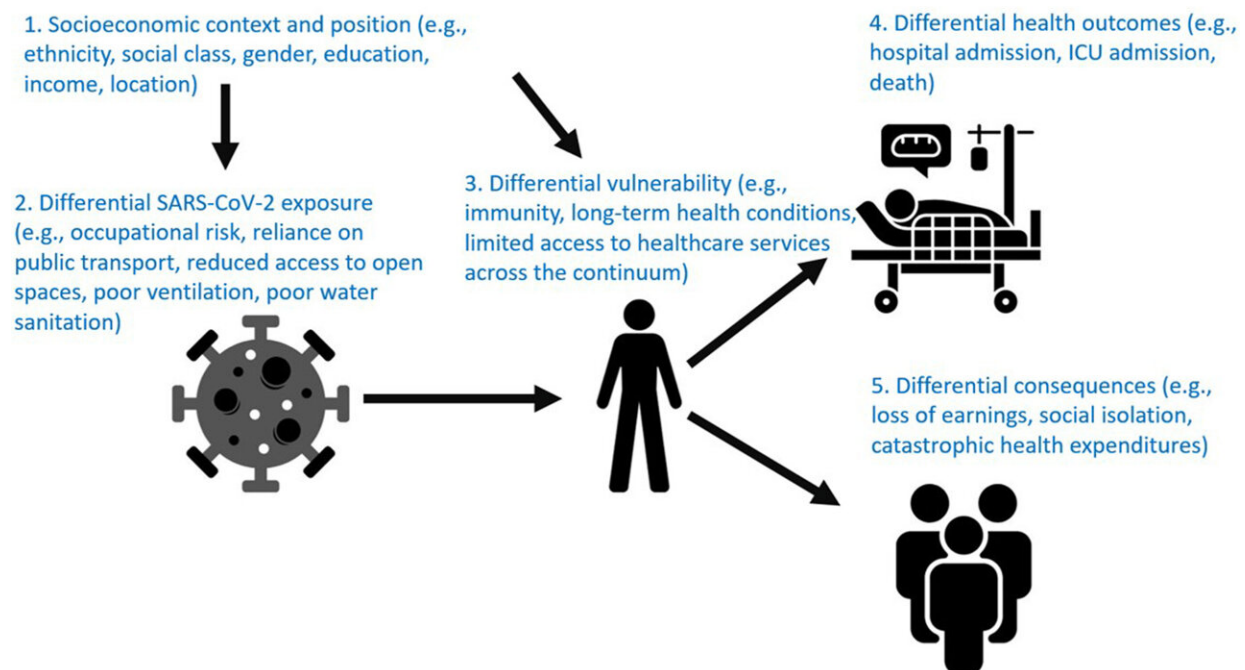


Experts outline how to reduce COVID-19 health inequalities for ethnic minority groups

January 22 2024, by Joe Stafford



Potential endpoints following exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (black), and how the PPHC analytical framework (originally published by WHO in 2010) can be applied to study differential outcomes in ethnic minority groups (in blue). Credit: *eClinicalMedicine* (2024). DOI: 10.1016/j.eclinm.2023.102360

An international collaborative led by The University of Manchester and the University of Leicester has published a new paper that outlines how to reduce COVID-19 health inequity among ethnic minority groups.

The paper, commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) and [published](#) in *eClinicalMedicine*, builds on research already completed by both institutions during the pandemic that demonstrated that ethnic minority groups were disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

The paper brings together all of the available evidence, along with international experts in the field, to summarize why people from ethnic minority groups were more likely to be infected and die during the pandemic.

Researchers highlighted that ethnic minority groups were more likely to be exposed to those who were infected with COVID-19 because a high proportion were employed in key worker roles, making it more likely that they would themselves become infected. They also showed that certain ethnic minority groups were more likely to die once infected due to barriers in receiving adequate health care, such as delayed diagnosis and treatment due to job insecurity and financial issues, and in some cases language barriers.

In addition, the research showed they were more likely to suffer from social and [economic consequences](#)—for example, the inability to isolate once infected and in some cases the lack of adequate health care to meet their needs.

The authors state that ethnic minority groups were disadvantaged from the start due to longstanding health inequities caused by systemic racism and [racial discrimination](#). Furthermore, the reasons for ethnic inequities in COVID-19 infection, [severe disease](#) and death are interconnected.

The paper aims to provide a blueprint for policymakers and researchers to address these inequities so that they can be better prepared for future pandemics.

It states that a "one size fits all" approach to intervention does not work and that cultural, social and language barriers must be overcome along with other socio-economic issues.

"There is clear evidence of inequities in COVID-19 health outcomes for ethnic minority groups,. This research is of timely importance given the U.K.'s ongoing COVID-19 public inquiry, and there are clear opportunities to address racism and racial discrimination, to reduce [inequity](#)," says Dr. Patsy Irizar, the paper's lead author.

"This framework is the first of its kind to specifically address inequities during a pandemic," said Dr. Daniel Pan from the University of Leicester, the paper's co-lead author who is a specialist registrar in Infectious Diseases and General Internal Medicine and a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Doctoral Research Fellow. "The recommendations aim to ensure ethnic inequalities in treatment do not occur in future.

"The COVID-19 pandemic won't be the last and steps need to be taken now to reduce the inevitable consequences of the next pandemic on ethnic minority groups. We know that innovative approaches are required but if we plan for these, they can be overcome."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and amplified health inequalities for ethnic minority groups," said Professor of Clinical Infectious Diseases Manish Pareek from the University of Leicester, the paper's senior author.

"It is important that we learn lessons from the [pandemic](#) and this work, in collaboration with international experts and the WHO, provides guidance on how to reduce the disproportionate impact on ethnic [minority](#) groups for future pandemics."

More information: Patricia Irizar et al, Disproportionate infection, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19 in ethnic minority groups and Indigenous Peoples: an application of the Priority Public Health Conditions analytical framework, *eClinicalMedicine* (2024). DOI: [10.1016/j.eclinm.2023.102360](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2023.102360)

Provided by University of Manchester

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