

Racism and medicine: a primer

ACEs, trauma and racism

Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience [Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\) - The Jordan Institute for Families](#)

ACEs science and racism: An introduction [ACEs Science and Racism | PACEs Connection Resources Center | PACEsConnection](#)

Racism and health

Reckoning with histories of medical racism and violence in the USA. The Lancet 2020

[Reckoning with histories of medical racism and violence in the USA - The Lancet](#)

In sum, racism has not just been incidental to the history of American medicine, and much medical practice around the world, but entrenched in it

- This article includes an excellent reading list

Ethnic inequalities in health: should we talk about implicit white supremacism? <https://pmj.bmj.com/content/96/1132/117.full>

The Lancet: Using the right words to discuss ethnic disparities in COVID-19 [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30162-6.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667(20)30162-6.pdf)

British Medical Journal: Racism in Medicine

<https://www.bmj.com/racism-in-medicine>

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From race-based to race-conscious medicine: how anti-racist uprisings call us to act. The Lancet 2020

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)32076-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32076-6/fulltext)

"Physical characteristics used to identify racial groups vary with geography and do not correspond to underlying biological traits"

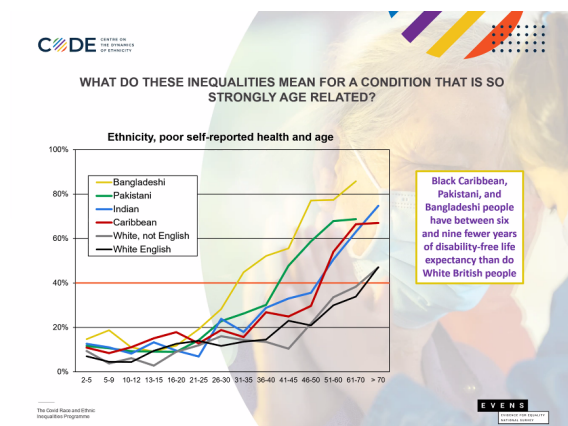
Challenging racism in the use of health data. The Lancet 2021 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/article/PIIS2589-7500\(21\)00019-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/article/PIIS2589-7500(21)00019-4/fulltext)

"race-adjusted algorithms "risk baking inequity into the system", by interpreting racial inequalities in the underlying data as immutable biological facts rather than as reflecting the societal effects of racism"

There is a **lack of data** about BAME people in research looking at **Access** [to healthcare], **Experiences** [of healthcare] and **Outcomes** [of healthcare]. What data we have consistently shows poorer access, poorer experiences (for patients and staff) and poorer outcomes. BAME people are also under-represented in medical research for new medical interventions, they are under-represented in the research community and under-represented in academic and educational institutions.

Racism weathers Black Bodies

The UK has not collected any survey data specifically on older ethnic minority populations, but data from 2004, the last year when the Health Survey for England oversampled ethnic minority people (over 15 years ago), found that the proportion of people aged 61-70 reporting fair or bad health was 34% for white English people but 86% for Bangladeshi people, 69% for Pakistani people, 63% for Indian people, and 67% for black Caribbean people. These data show that the health of white English people aged 61-70 is equivalent to that for Caribbean people in their late 40s or early 50s, Indian people in their early 40s, Pakistani people in their late 30s, and Bangladeshi people in their late 20s or early 30s.⁹

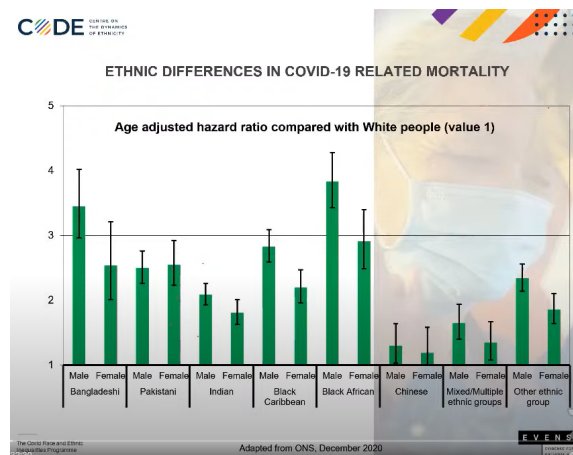


The vaccination programme for Covid prioritises people on the basis of age which means that the wealthiest whitest parts of the country - which also tend to have lower rates of COVID infections, hospitalisations and deaths - are given priority for vaccinations.

Poorer areas with lower life expectancy, and younger, sicker, more ethnically diverse populations have to wait until the older, healthier, lower risk white people are vaccinated.

[This](#) from the Race Equality Foundation:

1. When we looked at the risk of infection, we calculated the average risk of infection (confirmed by a test) for black and minority ethnic people to be 56% higher than White British for working-age and 69% higher for those aged 65 plus.
2. Our analysis shows the risk of death from COVID for black and minority ethnic people is 12% higher for working-age and 19% higher for age 65 plus than for White British people. However, higher levels of pre-existing conditions such as blood pressure and diabetes in black and minority ethnic communities do not explain this difference.



A review of the report by Public Health England into disparities in risks and outcomes of COVID-19 between ethnic groups and by level of deprivation [Layout 1 \(raceequalityfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Experiences of care

Patients from BAME backgrounds are less likely to respond to the **Cancer Experience Survey** than those from a white background. Of those that did respond to the 2010 survey, more rated their cancer experience critically than those from a white background <https://spotlight.cthesigns.co.uk/race-cancer-and-inequality/>

Micro-aggressions and poor health

<https://centerforhealthjournalism.org/2017/11/08/how-racism-and-microaggressions-lead-worse-health>

Experiences of BAME NHS staff According to the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard 2019 Data analysis report for NHS trusts, in 140 (61.4%) trusts, 'BME staff reported a higher level of harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months compared to white staff.' The percentage of BME staff experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from patients, relatives, or the public in the last 12 months is the highest it has been for 4 years at 29.8%.

Life in the shadow of the snowy white peaks: race inequalities in the NHS workforce [Life in the shadow of the snowy white peaks | The King's Fund](#)

Outcomes

Maternal health—or lack of it—is one of the starkest examples of racial health inequalities in the United Kingdom and in the United States. Work in the UK by University of Oxford researchers found that between 2014 and 2016 the rate of maternal death in pregnancy was 8 in 100 000 white women, compared with 15 in 100 000 Asian women and 40 in 100 000 black women <https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m442?sso=>

Bioethics and race #BlackBioethics. #BlackBioethics Toolkit.

<http://www.bioethics.net/2020/06/toolkit-bioethics-and-race-blackbioethics>

Illnesses

-Sickle cell disease

· <https://academic.oup.com/jpepsy/article/43/7/779/4942298> Describing Perceived Racial Bias Among Youth With Sickle Cell Disease

Mental health and racism

-Adult psychiatric morbidity survey 2014 APMS:

Inequalities in mental health treatment*People in the Black/ Black British group had particularly low treatment rates.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey-mental-health-and-wellbeing-england-2014>

- Royal College of Psychiatrists 2018 Racism and mental health

· https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/position-statements/ps01_18.pdf?sfvrsn=53b60962_4

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Medical education

Decolonising Medical Education and exploring white fragility [Decolonising medical education and exploring White fragility \(bjgpopen.org\)](#)

Decolonising the medical school curriculum [Decolonising the Medical Curriculum – A UCL Medical School initiative towards a historically, culturally and critically conscious curriculum \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Changing How Race Is Portrayed in Medical Education: Recommendations From Medical Students https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/fulltext/2020/12000/changing_how_race_is_portrayed_in_medical.16.aspx

Decolonising ideas of healing in medical education https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10090977/1/Lokugamage_Decolonising%20ideas%20of%20healing%20in%20medical%20education-Proof-2019.pdf

Attitudes in healthcare and health inequity

- Why cultural safety rather than cultural competency is required to achieve health equity: a literature review and recommended definition

International Journal for Equity in Health volume 18, Article number: 174 (2019)
<https://equityhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-019-1082-3>

Are Medical Schools Turning a Blind Eye towards Racism? BMJ [Are medical schools turning a blind eye to racism? | The BMJ](#)

[Layout 1 \(raceequalityfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

The BMA Medical schools charter

<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/2030/bma-med-school-charter-implementation.pdf>

Differential attainment in GP training

<https://bjgpopen.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Viewpoints%20and%20racism/Viewpoint%20%20NB%20v5.pdf>

The challenges of understanding differential attainment in postgraduate medical education

[The challenges of understanding differential attainment in postgraduate medical education | British Journal of General Practice \(bjgp.org\)](#)

Ethnic inequalities in Covid-19 are playing out again – how can we stop them? IPPR 2020 <https://www.ippr.org/blog/ethnic-inequalities-in-covid-19-are-playing-out-again-how-can-we-stop-them>

Books:

Superior: the return of race science. Angela Saini

<https://www.angelasaini.co.uk/superior>

“Angela Saini’s latest book explores the murky history of race science and the ways in which it is being resurrected in the 21st century. Combining science, history and politics, it explains how race maps out biologically and how those on the far-right are attempting to repackage racism.”

My Grandmother’s Hands. Resmaa Menakem

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-sketchbook/2019/06/therapist-expands-book-on-racialized-trauma-to-video-e-course/>

“When we start to talk about trauma, usually we’re talking about something personally that happened to you, but I started to see the traumatic effects of white supremacy”

Videos

Racism: The Underlying Condition. Excellent video from the American Public Health Association https://youtu.be/Cozo8lj_RT4

Action and hope

Agosti, J., MPP, Connors, K., MSW, LCSW-C, Hisle, B., MSW, Kiser, L., PhD, Streider, F., PhD, Thompson, E., PhD. *Baltimore: A Trauma and Resilience Informed City for Children and Families – Breakthrough Series Collaborative Final Report*. The Baltimore Partnership for Family and Trauma-Informed Care (2016).

http://www.ghrconnects.org/content/sites/uwshr/Overall_Trauma_Resilient_Informed_City_Baltimore_BSC_report.FINAL.pdf