

Racism, social class and health: findings from the Health Survey for England

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For referencing, please use Karlsen S and Nazroo J (2002) The relationship between racial discrimination, social class and health among ethnic minority groups. *American Journal of Public Health* **92(4)**: 624-31, available from <http://www.ajph.org/>, which reports similar analyses using data from the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities.

Discrimination and health

- Impact of different forms of discrimination
 - Societal
 - Institutional
 - Interpersonal
- Effects of age, gender, social class and cohort
- Believing the experience to be racist
- Responses to racism

Discrimination and health

Discrimination may affect health through:

- Exposure to toxic substances and hazardous conditions at work and at home.
- Targeted marketing of legal and illegal psychoactive substances and other commodities.
- Inadequate health care.
- Economic and social deprivation.
- Socially inflicted trauma.

(Krieger 2000)

Perceived and experienced racial harassment and social position

Proportion of people reporting no harassment, verbal abuse, or an attack on their person or property in the last year:

No	89%	(2771)
Yes, verbal abuse only	9%	(294)
Yes, physical/property attack	2%	(61)

Have you ever been refused a job or treated unfairly at work for reasons which you think were to do with your race, colour, religious or ethnic background?:

No	82%	(2554)
Yes	18%	(572)

Do you think there are employers in Britain who would refuse a job to a person because of their race, colour, religion or cultural background?:

No/hardly any	32%	(1005)
Fewer than half	47%	(1470)
About half	16%	(508)
Most	5%	(143)

Perceived and experienced racial harassment and social position by ethnic minority group

	Ethnic group				
	Irish (N=676)	Caribbean (N=622)	Bangladeshi (N=590)	Indian (N=593)	Pakistani (N=645)
Experienced racial harassment					
No	93%	85%	91%	86%	87%
Verbal	6%	13%	7%	11%	11%
Physical	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Experienced work-related discrimination					
No	93%	61%	93%	77%	83%
Yes	7%	39%	7%	23%	17%
Perceived racism by British employers					
None	16%	11%	69%	32%	36%
A few	68%	53%	21%	46%	44%
About half	13%	27%	8%	18%	16%
More than half	3%	9%	2%	4%	4%

Health status

Self-reported fair or poor health (fair/poor/very poor combined)	31%	(981)
Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits the kind of paid work that you can do?	22%	(699)
Ever been told by a doctor that you had high blood pressure?	14%	(435)
Ever been told by a doctor that you had diabetes?	6%	(194)
Ever had severe chest pain, or experienced a heart attack or been diagnosed with angina?	10%	(286)
Estimated rate of psychosis (based on the PSQ)	85	per thousand
Estimated rate of depression (based on the CIS_R)	179	per thousand

Odds ratios from regression analysis of depression with social position and racial harassment, all ethnic minority groups combined.

Experience of racial harassment:	No attack	1.00
	Verbal abuse	2.35**
	Physical attack	2.84*
Work-related discrimination:	No	1.00
	Yes	1.50*
Perception of discrimination:	No/hardly any	1.00
	Fewer than half	0.98
	About half	1.69*
	More than half	1.81*
Social class:	Non-manual	1.00
	Manual	0.89
Economic activity:	Working	1.07
	Unemployed	2.08**
	Other not working	2.35**
Age		1.00
Gender:	Male	1.00
	Female	1.13

Perceived and experienced racial harassment and social position by ethnic minority group

	Standardised for age and gender					
	Experience of racism in last year	Ever experienced racism at work	Feels most British employers are racist	Manual social class	Unemployed	Other not working
General health	1.77**	1.04	1.81**	1.35*	1.77	2.43**
Limiting illness	1.68*	1.00	1.61**	0.94	2.71**	3.16**
Diabetes	0.84	1.46	1.62	0.73	2.29	2.02**
Heart disease	1.22	1.10	1.75*	1.33	2.00	3.02*
High blood pressure	1.16	1.12	0.93	1.20	0.68	1.58*
Psychosis	2.40**	1.42	1.20	1.21	1.04	1.71*
Depression	2.42**	1.50*	1.74**	0.90	1.07	2.08**

* 0.01<p<0.05

** p<0.01

Associations between depression, racism and social position by ethnic minority group

	Standardised for age and gender					Total
	Irish	Caribbean	Ethnic group Bangladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	
Experienced racism harassment						
No	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Yes	3.02*	2.29*	1.41	2.29*	2.68*	2.42*
Experienced workplace discrimination						
No	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Yes	2.15*	2.13*	2.47	2.46*	1.10	1.50*
Proportion of British employers who are racist						
Fewer than half	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Half or more	2.78*	1.32	1.37	0.95	1.29	1.74*
Social class						
Non-manual	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Manual	0.78	0.87	0.64	1.50	0.75	0.90
Economic activity						
Employed	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Unemployed	0.10*	2.89*	0.56	1.62	2.72*	1.07
Other not working	2.02*	1.80*	2.75	2.72*	1.99*	2.08*