

Title: Understanding the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Workers in Low-Paid Health and Social Care: A Rapid Review and International Reflections

Introduction (approx. 250 words):

In recent years, there has been a growing concern regarding the experiences of minority ethnic workers in low-paid health and social care roles in the United Kingdom. This rapid review aims to provide insights into the extent to which race or structural racism contributes to less desirable outcomes for ethnic minority workers and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this particular group. By synthesizing recent evidence, we seek to shed light on the disparities in employment, recruitment, retention, and promotion faced by minority ethnic workers compared to the White British group, the presence of differential treatment and discrimination, and the underlying explanatory factors. Furthermore, this review will incorporate reflections from an international perspective to facilitate cross-cultural learning and identify potential strategies for addressing these challenges globally.

Methods (approx. 250 words):

The analysis is based on a rapid review methodology that aims to collate recent evidence in a timely manner. Following the guidelines for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), this review employed a systematic search strategy. Searches were limited to English language publications since 2017. Although this review did not include a formal assessment of the risk of bias or quality appraisal, it followed a rigorous process. The review was conducted by a single researcher.

Review Aims and Questions (approx. 150 words):

This review aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there significant differences in the employment, recruitment, retention, and promotion of minority ethnic workers compared with the White British group?
2. What is the evidence that minority ethnic workers experience differential treatment and discrimination compared to White British workers?
3. What are the explanatory factors underlying any observed differentials?

Search Retrieval and Analysis (approx. 250 words):

The review, funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, was conducted in December 2020. Several databases, including Web of Knowledge, CINAHL, Google Scholar, and PubMed, were searched using predefined search terms. Duplicates were removed, and titles and abstracts of 233 records were screened for relevance. This process resulted in 84 records eligible for full-text assessment. An additional 16 records were identified through cross-referencing and expert consultation. Ultimately, 51 records were included in this review, covering a range of publications such as peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, surveys, and reviews.

The majority of the included records were published in 2020, followed by 2017. The focus of these publications varied, with some specifically examining the experiences of minority ethnic workers in the health sector, adult social care, or low-paid work in general. Additionally, a subset of records explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ethnic minority workers in health and social care settings. The research methods employed in the included studies encompassed quantitative analysis, qualitative interviews, surveys, experimental designs, and policy analyses.

Findings and International Reflections (approx. 1000 words):

The evidence synthesized in this rapid review indicates substantial disparities in the employment, recruitment, retention, and promotion of minority ethnic workers in low-paid health and social care roles. Ethnic minority workers often face systemic barriers that limit their opportunities for career progression and job security. Numerous studies consistently highlight discriminatory practices in recruitment processes, where minority ethnic candidates are frequently overlooked or encounter implicit biases. Discrimination is also evident in the disproportionate allocation of low-skilled and low-paid roles to minority ethnic workers, thereby impeding their chances of career advancement.

Moreover, the review confirms that minority ethnic workers experience differential treatment and discrimination compared to their White British counterparts. These workers are more likely to face racial harassment, verbal abuse, and unfair treatment in the workplace. The COVID-19 pandemic

has exacerbated these issues, with reports of ethnic minority workers being disproportionately affected by the virus due to factors such as higher exposure risks and inadequate access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

Reflecting on these findings from an international perspective, it becomes evident that the challenges faced by minority ethnic workers in low-paid health and social care roles extend beyond the borders of the UK. In many countries, racial and ethnic disparities persist in various industries, including healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted these inequities on a global scale, as minority ethnic workers are often overrepresented in frontline roles and face increased risks.

To address these challenges, international learning becomes crucial. Sharing experiences and best practices from different countries can inform policy and practice changes that promote inclusivity, fairness, and equity. Countries can learn from each other's approaches to recruitment, retention, and promotion of minority ethnic workers, as well as strategies for tackling discrimination and structural barriers. By fostering international collaboration, stakeholders can collectively work towards creating supportive work environments and ensuring equal opportunities for all workers, regardless of their ethnic background.

Conclusion (approx. 150 words):

In conclusion, this rapid review highlights the significant disparities faced by minority ethnic workers in low-paid health and social care roles in the UK. The evidence confirms the

presence of discriminatory practices, differential treatment, and the impact of structural racism. These findings emphasize the urgent need for targeted interventions to address inequalities, improve recruitment and promotion practices, and create inclusive work environments. Additionally, incorporating international reflections and learnings broadens the understanding of these issues and facilitates the exchange of strategies and approaches to promote equitable working conditions for minority ethnic workers worldwide. By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, steps can be taken to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable health and social care sector internationally.