

Ethnic differences in influences on quality of life at older ages: a quantitative analysis

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Key Words:

Quality of Life, CALD, inequalities, UK

Research aim:

This article sets out to examine ethnic differences in the key influences on quality of life for older people in the context of the increasing health and wealth of British older people generally and the ageing of the post-1945 migrants. It is based on secondary multivariate analysis of the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities of England and Wales.

Results/Conclusion:

Four dimensions (incorporating seven factors) that influence the quality of life were determined among this age group: quality of neighbourhood (availability of local amenities, and problems with crime and the physical environment); social networks and community participation (strength of family networks, and community participation); material conditions (income, wealth and housing conditions) and health. The relative position of the four ethnic groups on the seven factors illustrated two contrasting patterns. For the factors based on conventional indicators of social inequalities - such as material circumstances, health, participation in formal social networks, and quality of the physical environment - the white group ranked highest, the Pakistanis lowest, and the Indian and Caribbean groups ranked second and third. But factors that capture more immediate and subjective elements, such as frequency of family contact and the desirability of the residential neighbourhood, displayed a diametrically opposite rank-order, with the Pakistani group ranked first and the white group fourth. The study highlights the value of examining separately the various influences on quality of life. Contradictory patterns are revealed in key influences that are hidden by global measures. The study also reveals the difficulty of identifying culturally-neutral measures of quality of locality, with ethnic minority groups having a more positive perception of their area than rated by conventional measures of area deprivation such as the Index of Deprivation.

Implications:

Cultural Group(s):

Four ethnic groups (Caribbean, Indian and East African, Asian, and Pakistani) using the white population as the reference group

Location of study:

United Kingdom

Age group:

45-60 years

Number included in study:

2,362 (1,068 white, 514 Caribbean, 581 Indian/East African/ Asian, and 199 Pakistani)

Type of participants:

Respondents aged 45-74 years from the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities of England and Wales

Research approach:

Quantitative

Type of data:

Secondary

Secondary data sources used:

Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities of England and Wales

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Multivariate analysis

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: