Rather than being a specialist concern, attending to ethnic diversity and migration must be part-and-parcel of understanding and meeting the health needs of local populations.

Promising local practice in needs assessment and strategic planning should be shared and benchmarking should be used to encourage wider adoption.

The growing attention to new migrant groups is welcome but should be integrated within a broader ethnic diversity and anti-racism agenda.

Efforts are needed to increase the volume of public health research that addresses ethnicity and migration. Steps must be taken to diversify the public health research workforce.

Knowledge generation systems must be reconfigured to transfer resource and influence to ethnic minority members of the public.

Though completed prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, recent events that highlight persistent ethnic inequality should provide additional impetus to address the shortcomings identified by this study.
Key findings

Local public health practice:

• Most Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) paid some attention to ethnicity and migration, but understanding and analysis were limited. Examples of promising practice were found, but these tended to be ‘special’ pieces of work.
• Few ‘headline’ JSNA documents included clear messages regarding health needs of these groups. Recommendations for action were rare.
• Growing concern with new migrant groups and ‘asylum seekers’ was evident.
• There was little explicit attention to monitoring or tackling racism and its impacts on health.
• Comparing to a 2010 assessment, there was little evidence of improvement in data availability, analysis or strategic planning to improve the health of these groups (see Figure 1 below).

National research arena:

• A review of major funding streams indicated little research focused on ethnicity or migration as key social determinants of health.
• Stakeholders identified weak national leadership, limited investment in datasets, and White-dominated academia as key concerns.

Further information


For further information please see the SPHR website at: https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/research/integrating-attention-to-ethnicity-and-migration-within-applied-public-health-and-health-inequalities-research/

Contact the researchers

Please contact Sarah Salway at:
email: s.salway@sheffield.ac.uk

Figure 1: Assessment of attention to ethnicity within JSNA documents 2010 and 2018

About the School

The NIHR School for Public Health Research is a partnership between the Universities of Sheffield; Bristol; Cambridge; Imperial; and University College London; The London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM); LiLaC – a collaboration between the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster; and Fuse - The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health a collaboration between Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

Website: sphr.nihr.ac.uk
Twitter: @NIHRSPHR
Email: sphr@ncl.ac.uk