

# Exploring ethnic minority women's experiences of maternity care during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic: a qualitative study

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To explore ethnic minority women's experiences of maternity care during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. **Design:** Qualitative study. **Population:** Sixteen Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women who were pregnant, or had delivered within 6 weeks prior to interview in a predominantly urban Scottish health board area. **Methods:** Thematic analysis of semi-structured in-depth interviews. **Results** Four themes were identified: 'communication', 'interactions with health care professionals', 'racism' and 'the pandemic effect'. Each theme had relevant sub-themes. 'Communication' encompassed respect, accent bias, language barrier and cultural dissonance; 'interactions with health care professionals': continuity of care, empathy, informed decision making and dissonance with other health care systems; 'racism' was deemed to be institutional, interpersonal and internalised; and 'the pandemic effect' consisted of isolation, psychological impact and barriers to access of care. **Main outcome measures:** To explore the experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, antenatal and postnatal care in women belonging to ethnic minorities and to identify any specific challenges that these women faced during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. **Conclusions** This study highlights specific challenges faced by ethnic minority women in pregnancy, which intersect with the unique problems posed by the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic to potentially widen existing ethnic disparities in experiences of maternity care. **Funding:** Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of West of Scotland (20/WS/0168) on 26/11/2020.

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