

The ethnic density effect on experiences of racism among ethnic minority people in the UK

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Outline

- Racism in the UK
- Racism and health
- Is racism lower in areas of greater ethnic density?
- Buffering effects of ethnic density
- Hypothesised mechanisms

Racism

- Ideology of inferiority used to justify unequal treatment (discrimination) of members of groups defined as inferior, by both individuals and societal institutions (Williams, 1999).
 - Interpersonal or personally mediated
 - Institutional
 - Internalised

Racism in the UK

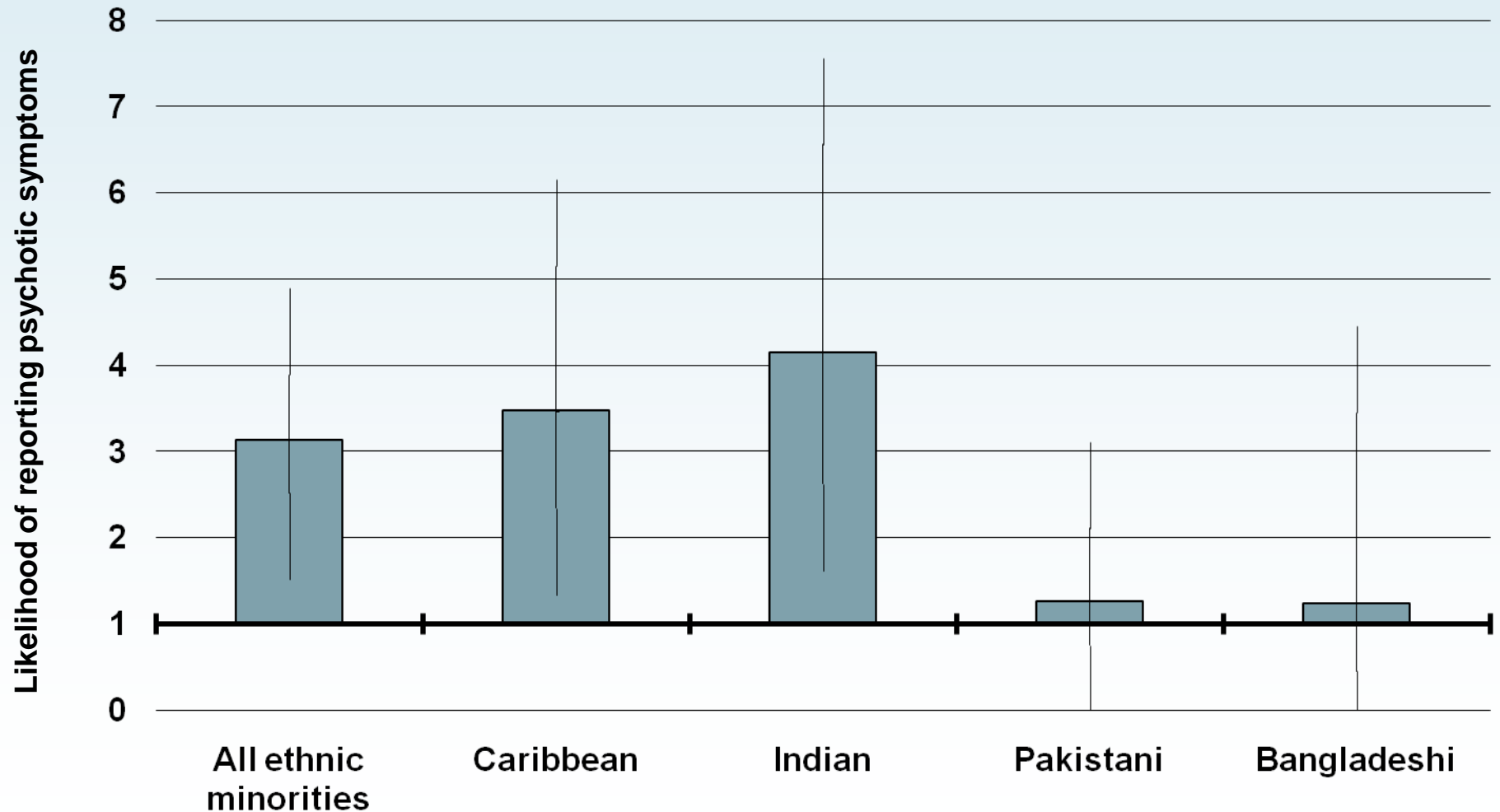
Latest figures (Citizenship Survey, 2008/09):

- 29% of ethnic minority people worried about physical attack due to colour, ethnic origin or religion
- 10% of ethnic minority people were refused job or promotion due to 'race' or colour in the last 5 years
- 27% of ethnic minority people think they would be treated worse than other 'races' by several organisations
- 64% of ethnic minority people and 41% of white people think there is more prejudice in Britain now than 5 years ago

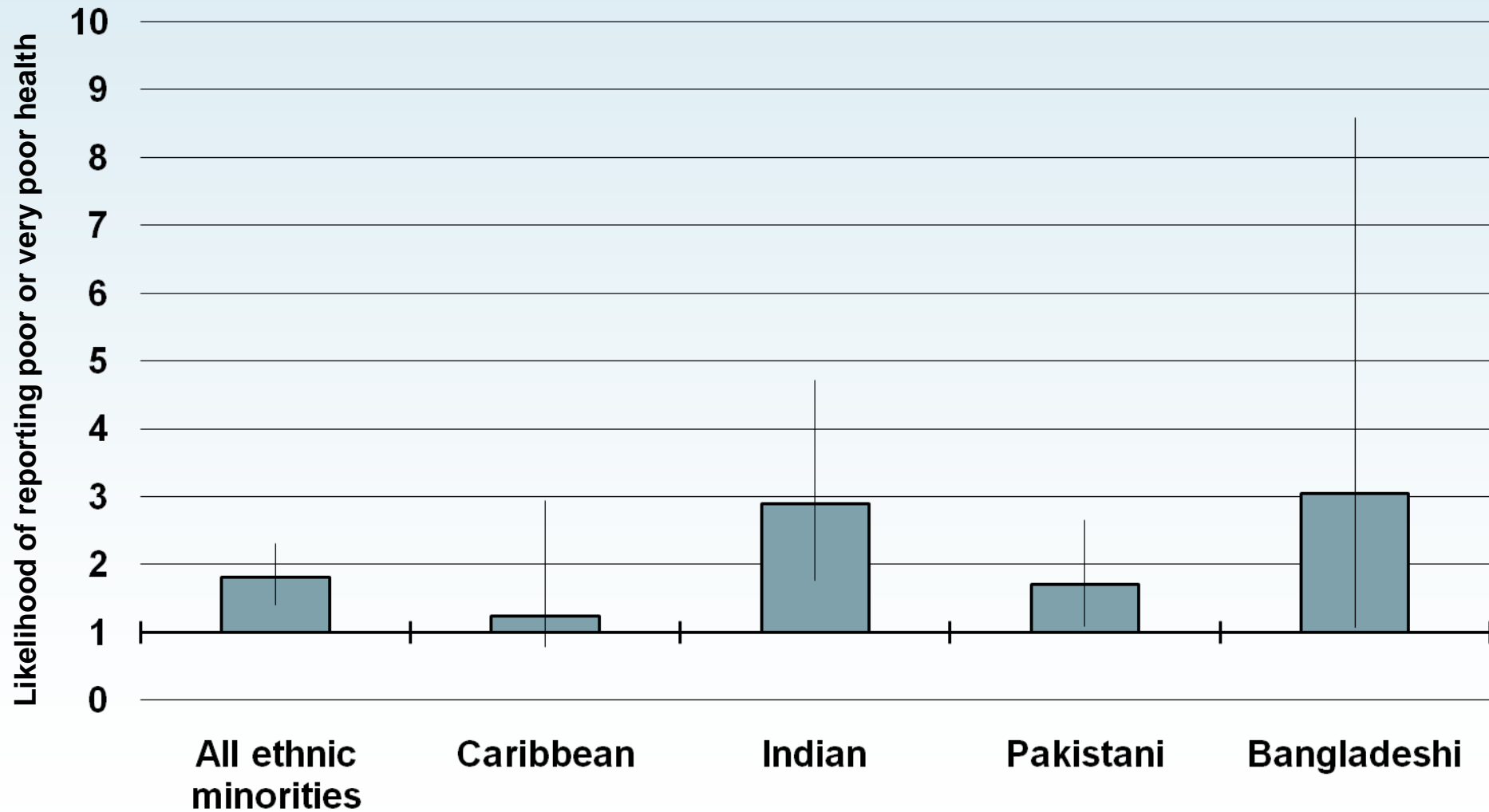
Racism and health

- Distal causal mechanism of ethnic inequalities in health
- Experienced racism associated with outcomes including:
 - Higher levels of stress
 - High blood pressure
 - Poor mental health
 - Detrimental health behaviours (e.g., smoking)
 - Poor self-rated health
 - Limiting longstanding illness

Reports of psychotic symptomatology among people who have experienced interpersonal racism, as compared to those who have not



Reports of poor health among people who have experienced interpersonal racism, as compared to those who have not



Ethnic density

- Ethnic density effect: As the proportion of an ethnic minority group increases, their health complications will decrease
- Why might ethnic density be protective?
 - enhanced social cohesion
 - mutual social support
 - stronger sense of community
 - reduced exposure to racism
 - reduced effect of racism on health in areas of higher ethnic density

Ethnic density

- Ethnic density effect: As the proportion of an ethnic minority group increases, their health complications will decrease
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 - **reduced effect of racism on health in areas of higher ethnic density**

Is racism lower in areas of higher ethnic density?

- Fourth National Survey on Ethnic Minorities (1993/94)
- Sample:
 - Indian: n=1278
 - Pakistani: n=1190
 - Bangladeshi: n=594
 - Caribbean: n=1215
- Linked to 1991 UK Census at ward level

Measuring ethnic density

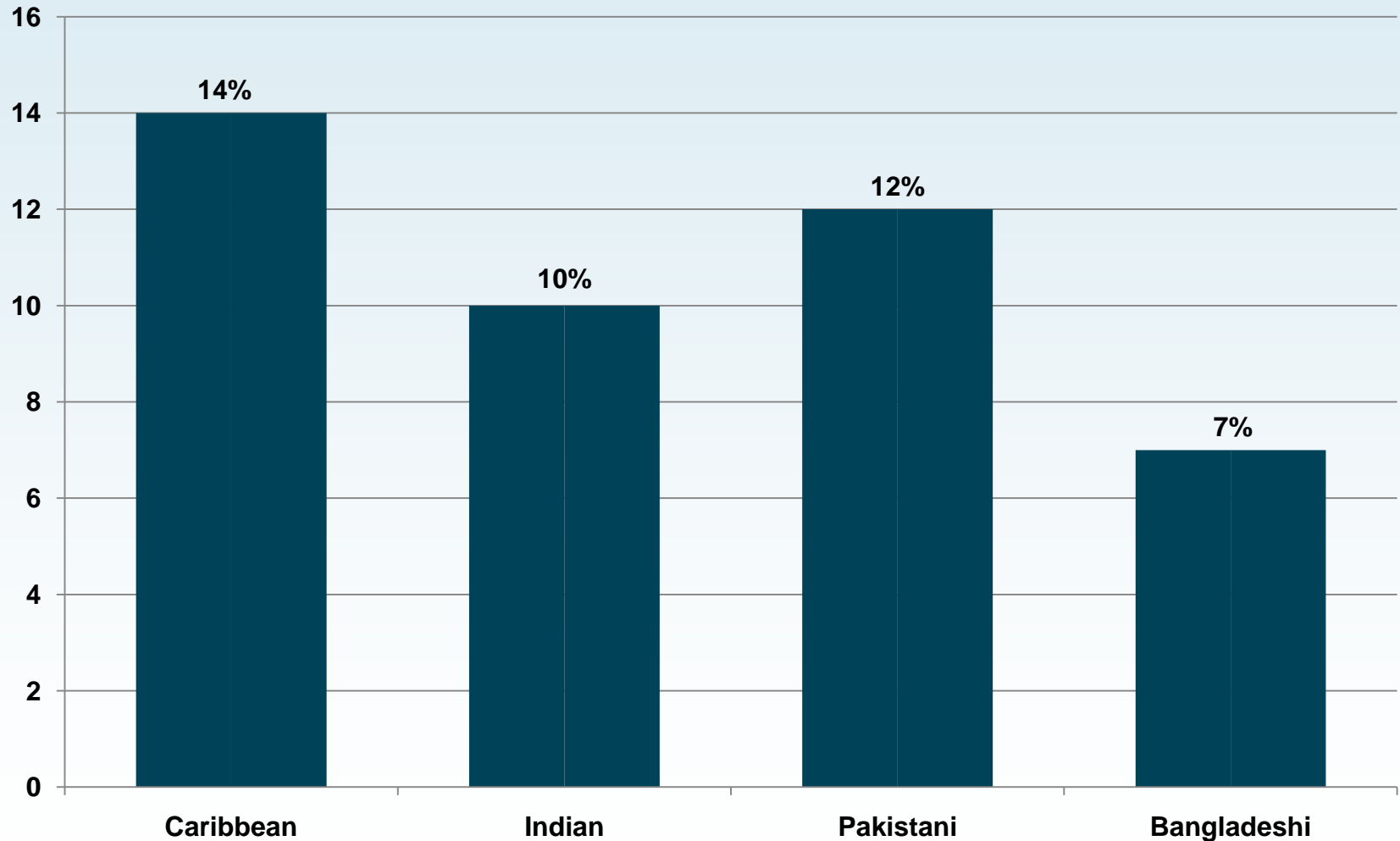
- Co-ethnic density linked from census

Indian density = $\frac{\text{no. Indian residents}}{\text{total no. residents in area}}$

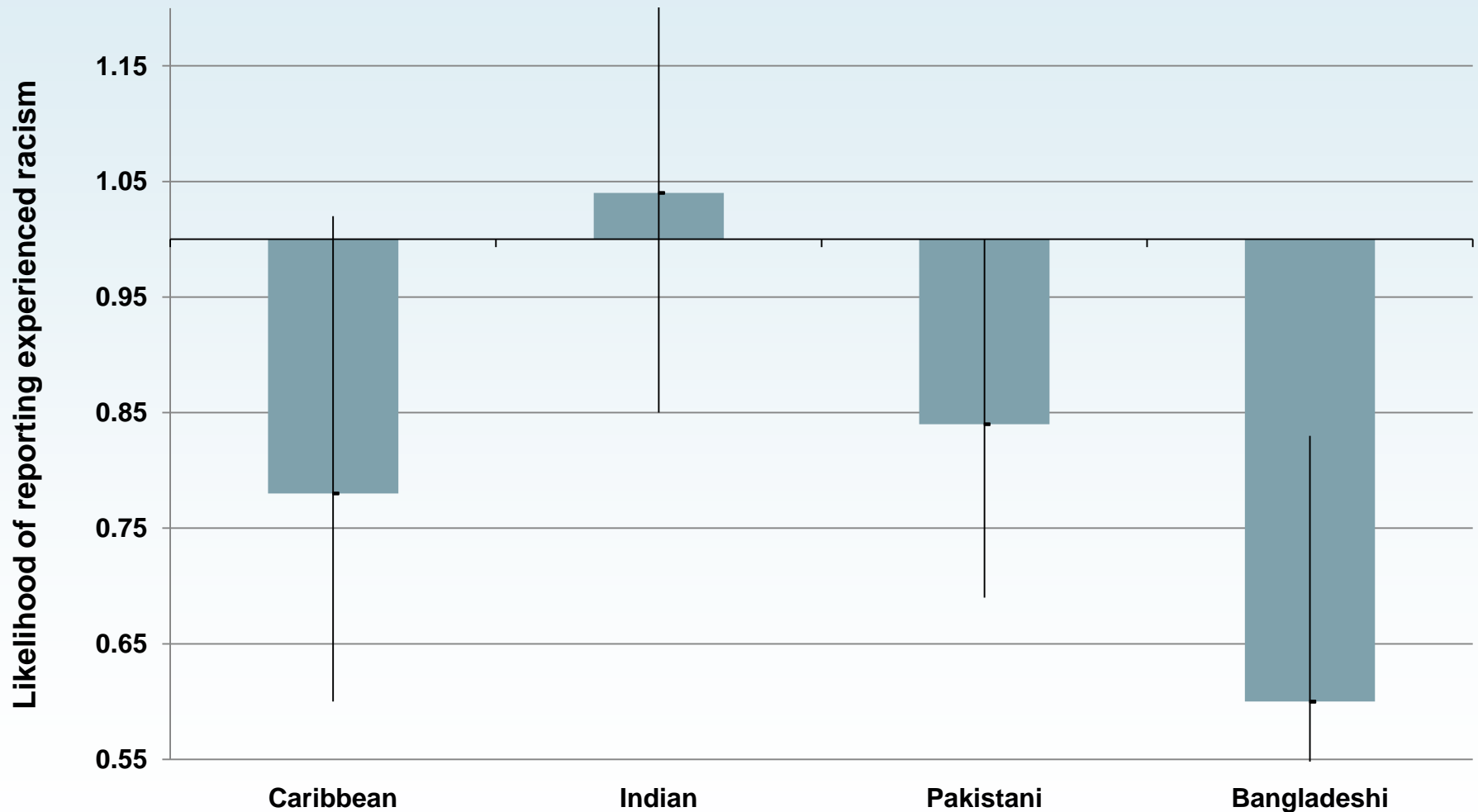
- Overall ethnic density linked from census

Overall ED = $\frac{\text{sum no. S. Asian \& Black residents}}{\text{total no. residents in area}}$

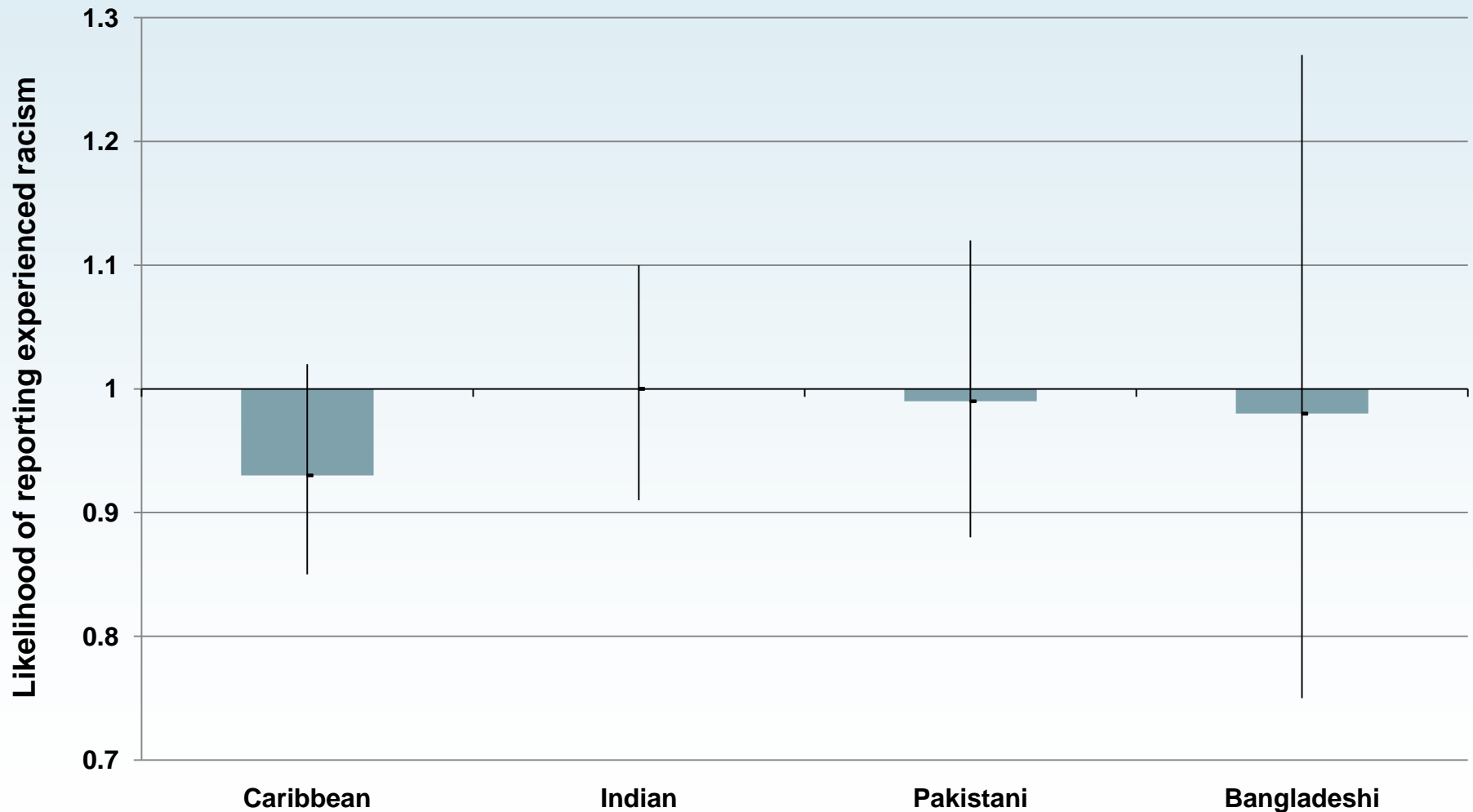
Experience of interpersonal racism in last year



Experiences of interpersonal racism by a 10% increase in co-ethnic density



Experiences of interpersonal racism by a 10% increase in overall ethnic minority density



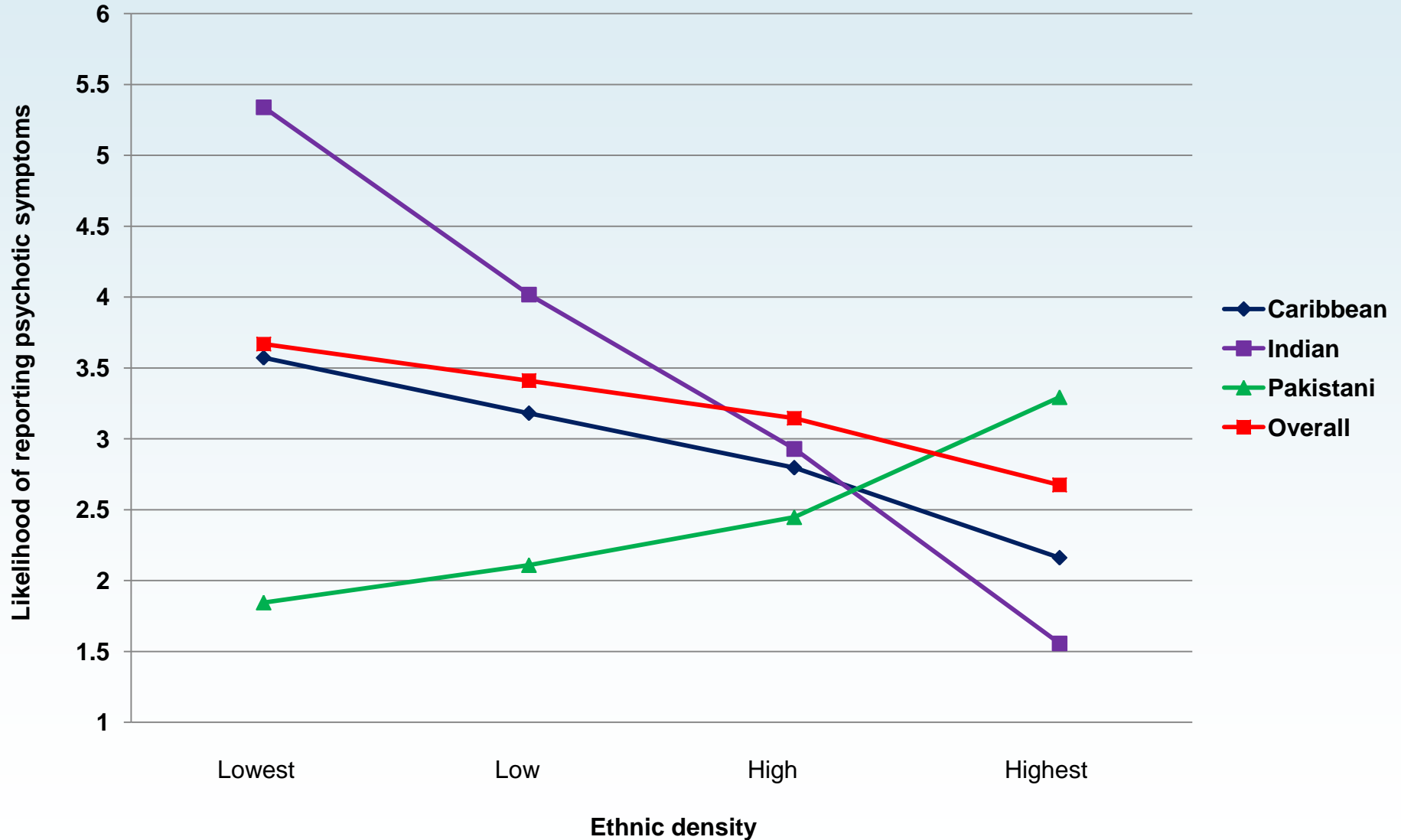
Summary: Ethnic density and racism

- Lower racism in areas of higher co-ethnic and overall ethnic minority density
- Possible mechanisms:
 - Decreased tolerance to harassment and racist behaviour
 - Decreased likelihood of encountering a racist perpetrator
 - Over 90% of perpetrators identified as White (Virdee, 1997)

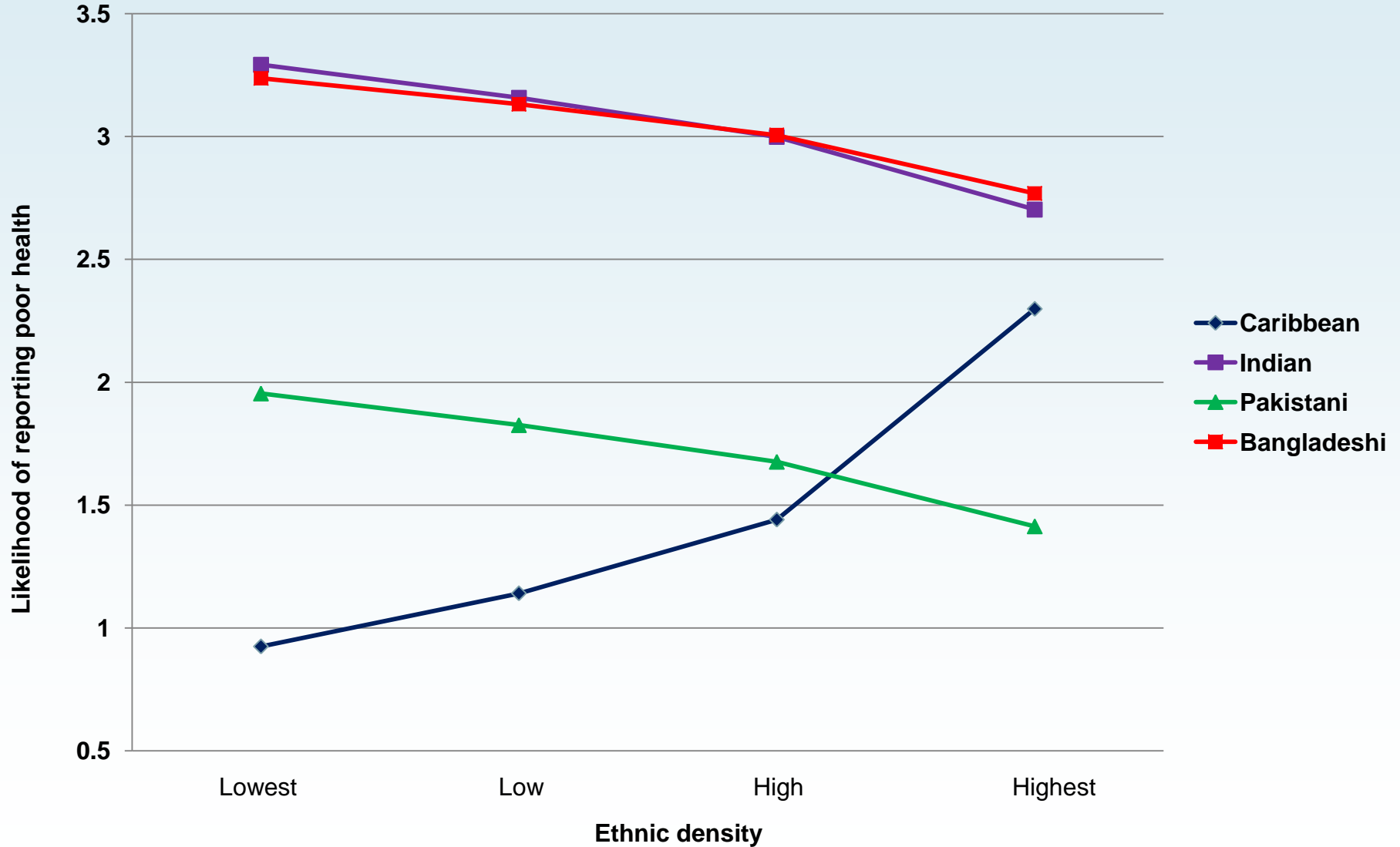
Buffering effect of ethnic density

- Among ethnic minority people who experience racism, is the detrimental association between racism and health reduced in areas of high ethnic density?

Buffering effect on mental health



Buffering effect on self-rated health



Summary: Buffering effect of ethnic density

- Tendency for association between experienced racism and poor health to diminish in areas of greater ethnic density.
- Stronger effects for mental health
- Possible mechanisms:
 - Change in appraisal process
 - Recognition and discussion of events with others

Conclusions

- Reduced exposure to racism in areas of greater ethnic density
- Effect of experienced racism on health is weaker in areas of greater ethnic density
- Different associations across ethnic groups
- More on ethnic density effect in next session

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Thank you

