

# Ethnically diverse neighbourhoods 'safer'

April 10 2014, by Mike Addelman

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Residents of ethnically diverse neighbourhoods can expect to experience fewer assaults than residents of neighbourhoods with little or no ethnic diversity, according to a new way of measuring violence.

Ian Warren, from The University of Manchester, says public health data on assaults give a more reliable picture of [criminality](#) than official police figures, criticised by the UK Statistics Authority earlier this year.

The UKSA withdrew 'gold-standard' status from police figures in January, pointing to 'accumulating evidence' of unreliability.

But patient assaults reported by the [ambulance service](#), A&E and hospital admissions, says Mr Warren, can give a much more reliable picture of how violent crime affects different neighbourhoods.

And according to the researcher, people living in poor neighbourhoods are ten times more likely to attend the emergency department as the result of an assault than people in the most advantaged neighbourhoods.

Using Greater Manchester public health data over three years between 2008 and 2010, he further discovered that [residents](#) of transient neighbourhoods could be up to three times as likely to expect violent crime.

The research also found that those neighbourhoods with the highest off-licence alcohol outlet densities were projected to experience 172% more hospital admissions for assault due to serious injury.

They are also likely to experience many more A&E attendances and ambulance callouts as the result of an assault.

The research - conducted for his PhD - studied 1,600 neighbourhoods of between 1000 and 3000 people across the conurbation.

He said: "Interpersonal violence is under-reported and under-recorded. I hope this work, and others like it, will focus the attention of policy-makers and all those interested in reducing the burden of violence on the police and the NHS.

"Being able to accurately assess levels of crime, and especially violent crime, is an essential way for any democracy to hold the police to account.

"Though police crime data is now widely seen as flawed, public health data can provide another more reliable method of measurement."

While the research revealed challenges in using [public health](#) data, it does, says Mr Warren, demonstrate their reliability in assessing the relationships between poverty, instability, ethnicity and alcohol availability and levels of violence.

Though the data applies to Greater Manchester, the findings are likely to be replicated across Britain's major cities, where [public health data](#) of this sort is also collected and where socio-demographic characteristics may well be similar.

Mr Warren added: "These findings point to a negative relationship between ethnic diversity and levels of violence, regardless of how it is measured. However, they do show that [ethnic diversity](#) dampens the relationship between poverty and violence in Greater Manchester.

"Higher levels of poverty and residential instability were both shown to result in higher levels of [violence](#). To make matters worse the easy availability of alcohol was found to accelerate and strengthen this relationship, particularly for more serious assaults resulting in hospital admission."

Provided by University of Manchester

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