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INTRODUCTION:

Studies have reported high rates of schizophrenia and other psychoses in the Black Caribbean population in the UK, between two and 14 times higher than for the White population (Sharpley et al., 2001; Cantor-Graae & Selten, 2005; Fearon et al. 2006). We sought to clarify whether social adversity may contribute to the higher risk of psychosis in the Black Caribbean population.

METHOD:

To address this question we used preliminary data from the ongoing EU-GEI study of first episode psychosis being conducted in London, UK. Socio-demographic information and data on social adversity were collected from 227 cases presenting with a first episode of psychosis to the South London & Maudsley National Health Service (NHS) Foundation Trust and from 199 controls representative of the local population. Logistic regression and odds ratios were calculated using Stata 11.

RESULTS:

67% (n=150) of cases, compared with 25% (n=49) of controls, reported two or more markers of social adversity at admission. Compared with White British, Black Caribbean patients were 3.7 times more likely to experience adversity (i.e., being unemployed, living alone and being single) in adulthood (OR 3.7; 95%CI 1.2-10.7 $p \leq 0.001$). Interestingly, the same pattern was not evident for the other ethnic minority groups (Asian, Black African, Non British White and other minority).

CONCLUSION:

These initial findings suggest that social adversity may be contributing to the high rates of psychosis observed in the Black Caribbean population in the UK.