

Grouping women of South Asian ethnicity for pregnancy research in New Zealand

Summary

This study highlights the need for a review of current NZ Ministry of Health ethnicity data protocols and recommends that researchers understand the risk profiles of participants prior to aggregation of groups in research, to mitigate risks associated with masking differences within ethnic groups. The study used national maternity and neonatal data, and singleton birth records between 2008 and 2017 linked using the Statistics NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure. Similarities were observed between women of Indian, Fijian Indian, South African Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnicities. Japanese and Korean mothers have a lower-risk profile. When risk profiles of women were considered for combined Indian-Māori, Indian-Pacific and Indian-New Zealand European ethnicity more closely represented their corresponding non-Indian ethnicities, highlighting masking of differences.