

Summary

Using population data on Asian secondary school students, we highlight how a complicated picture underlies the seemingly positive findings for the overall Asian group. Overall, one-in-five Asian students surveyed in 2019 did not access healthcare when they needed, known as ‘foregone healthcare’. The study shows East Asian students are especially likely to forgo healthcare. Students who forgo healthcare are known to be at higher risk of physical and mental health.

Both, East and South Asian students who experience discrimination by healthcare professionals and unfair treatment by teachers because of their ethnicity are more likely to forgo healthcare. Students who reported not having a family member to talk about their worries with were also more likely to forgo healthcare. For East Asian students, lower community and family SES and being bullied at school were significant predictors for foregone healthcare; for South Asian students, low perceived neighbourhood safety was a predictor of foregone healthcare.

Disaggregating youth data for the overall Asian group into East Asian and South Asian, or ideally at the specific Asian ethnicity level is important. By doing so, policymakers and planners would be able to better measure health issues and appropriately target responses.