Sexual and Gender Minorities, Social Networks, and Health

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LGBTQIA+ = Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGMs)

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer
- Intersex
- Asexual
- +
Gender Minorities

https://www.gaytascience.com/plot-me-genderfluid/
Sexual Minorities

Homosexual
Asexual
Pansexual

Bisexual
Demisexual
Polysexual
National Efforts to Expand SGM Research
Minority Stress and Outcomes

(c) General Stressors

(d) Minority Stress Processes (distal)
- prejudice events (discrimination, violence)

(f) Minority Stress Processes (proximal)
- expectations of rejection
- concealment
- internalized homophobia

(i) Mental Health Outcomes
- negative
- positive

Physical Health Outcomes

Health for SGMs

• Depression
  • 6x higher in older SGM people
    • 4.8% in non-SGMs
    • 31% in SGMs
  • 48% in transgender women
  • 51% in transgender men

• Overall Health
  • Worse in Lesbians
  • Worse in Bisexual women

• Higher Risky Health Behaviors
  • Smoking
  • Obesity
  • Unprotected sex
Egocentric Social Network Methodology
Name Generators

You

GGW

KAW

NPM

KK

CSL

OTP
Name Interpreting Questions

Relationship

Gender, race/ethnicity (demographic information)

How do you keep in touch?

How close do you feel to that person?
UC Berkeley Social Network Study

• Goal: observe changes in egocentric social networks in response to life changes

• 2 cohorts:
  • Younger cohort (21- to 30-year-olds)
  • Older cohort (50- to 70-year-olds)

• Included a variable on sexual orientation
  • Heterosexual or straight, Homosexual or gay, or Something else
The purpose of this study is to understand egocentric social networks and their relationship to health in sexual minorities (SMs).

• Decrease in scope from SGMs to SMs
Aim 1

• **Aim 1**: characterize and compare the egocentric social networks of SMs and of non-SMs in a younger and an older cohort.
Social Network Characteristics: Younger SMs versus non-SMs

- Kin (relatives): 31% (p=0.01) vs. 34%
- Same race/ethnicity: 60% (p=0.03) vs. 64%
- Feels especially close: 39% (p=0.04) vs. 43%
Social Network Characteristics: Older SMs versus non-SMs

Older SMs | Older non-SMs
---|---
• Kin (relatives) | 28% | 40% (p<0.01)
• Non-kin friends | 55% | 46% (p<0.01)
• Same race/ethnicity | 69% | 76% (p<0.01)
• Feels especially close | 41% | 48% (p=0.04)
Aim 2

- **Aim 2**: Examine if social network characteristics are associated with depression and poor health in an older cohort.
Depression & Social Network Characteristics

• Social network characteristics associated with a decrease in depression
  • Relatives providing socializing support
    • SMs have fewer relatives providing socializing support than non-SMs
  • Non-relative friends providing socializing support

• Network members of the same race/ethnicity
  • SM have fewer network members of the same race/ethnicity than non-SMs
Overall Health & Social Network Characteristics

• Social network characteristic associated with better overall health
  • Feeling especially close
    • SMs feel less close with their networks than non-SMs

• Frequent contact electronically
Coronavirus: How can we stay in virtual touch with older relatives

StayConnected to the Elderly During Social Distancing

For older family members in long-term care facilities, social distancing because of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be lonely. Here's how you can stay in touch.

March 18, 2020
Implications

• Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO)

• Extends knowledge of social networks of a marginalized population

• Reinforces the need to disaggregate study populations by sexual orientation (and not assume heterosexual)
  • And disaggregate by gender identity (and not assume cisgender and binary)
Dedication

To everyone who does not fit into the binary/heterosexual box –

When you feel alone or lonely trust that your people are out there. Reach out. Find them. You are not alone.

• Surround yourself with people who validate and affirm your identity and your truth

  – Janet Mock, It Gets Better Project
Gender Minorities and Sexual Minorities

[Image of the Gender Unicorn with a rainbow in its horn, highlighting concepts such as gender identity, expression, sex assigned at birth, physically attracted to, and emotionally attracted to with different colors and symbols. Each section is connected with arrows to the corresponding area on the body of the unicorn.]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuUCZga7IMo