LGBT Family Caregiving
Experiences and Supportive Service Needs

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(Funded in part by NIH/NIA, 1R01AG026526-01A2; 2R01AG026526-03A1)

The Diverse World of Family Caregiving
Institute of Medicine • April 17, 2015
Shifting Landscape

- Global worldwide aging and diversity
- Estimate 2.4 million LGBT, age 50 and older
- Institute of Medicine LGBT Health Report (2011)
- Healthy People 2020: National health priorities
- Rapid change in policy: Marriage equality
Closing the Gap

National Health, Aging and Sexuality Study (NHAS)
Caring and Aging with Pride over Time

- National survey
- Longitudinal design
- Use of biological, functional, self-report measures
-Benchmarked with HRS, NHIS

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OBJECTIVES: We investigated health disparities among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) adults aged 50 years and older.

METHODS: We analyzed data from the 2003–2010 Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (n = 96 992) on health outcomes, chronic conditions, access to care, behaviors, and screening by gender and sexual orientation with adjusted logistic regressions.

RESULTS: LGB older adults had higher risk of disability, poor mental health, smoking, and excessive drinking than did heterosexuals. Lesbians and bisexual women had higher risk of cardiovascular disease and obesity, and gay and bisexual men had higher risk of poor physical health and living alone than did heterosexuals. Lesbians reported a higher rate of excessive drinking than did bisexual women; bisexual men reported a higher rate of diabetes and a lower rate of being tested for HIV than did gay men.

CONCLUSIONS: Tailored interventions are needed to address the health disparities and unique health needs of LGB older adults. Research across the life course is needed to better understand health disparities by sexual orientation and age, and to assess subgroup differences within these communities.

October 2013, Vol 103, No. 10, Research and Practice
Distinct Care

Unique aspects of LGBT caregiving:

- Rely heavily on friends and partners, most of similar age
- Extensive caregiving by both women and men
- Often lack a will or durable power of attorney

► There may be limits in friends’ ability to provide care over the long-term, especially if decision-making is required

Adversity

LGBT caregivers and those receiving care:

- Victimization
- Discrimination
- Concealment of sexual and gender identity

► Many LGBT older adults and caregivers will have trauma related histories that must be considered


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Resilience

LGBT caregivers:

- Wellness activities
- Spiritual or religious activities

► Recognize the many strengths and resources of LGBT caregivers and their families

Unmet Needs

LGBT caregivers:
- Supportive long-term care facilities, case management, personal care, adult day care, and in-home services

► Most services fail to take into account the unique needs facing LGBT older adults and their caregivers

Programs & Training

- Redefine caregiving: Not private duty, public value
- LGBT culturally appropriate and relevant training
- Ensure inclusive caregiver support programs
- Use of advocates
- Opportunities for cross-generational support
- Education and outreach about advance directives
Policies

- Reauthorize Older Americans Act: LGBT vulnerable adults
- Economic security
- Enact non-discrimination legislation
- Access to marriage equality in all states
- Amend the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act
Research

- Integrate sexual and gender identity questions into caregiving studies
- Design and evaluate tailored interventions
- Investigate distinct needs by subgroups
- Test new strategies and use of technology
Moving Forward

- LGBT caregivers and families: Resilient yet at-risk
- Access to culturally competent care
- Responsive services, programs and policies
- Interventions tailored to unique needs
The Aging and Health Report
Disparities and Resilience among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Older Adults

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