

Lgbt a vulnerable population



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Who are the people often labeled with the acronym LGBT? LGBT's or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgenders, are members of every race, religion, gender, and ethnicity. But how do we identify them, address their health needs? Unlike ethnicity, race, religion, gender, and income, which are all questions posed on the U. S. Census, neither sexual orientation nor gender identity are listed.

According to HealthPeople. ov, this question is included on few state or federal surveys functionally ignoring that LGBT's are represented in each and every one of these categories. (LGBT Health, 2013) With this in mind it becomes a little more difficult to pin down just whom the people are that make up this vulnerable population. Vulnerable because of their limited access to proper health care and a resultant risk for poor health as a result of their economic status, age, ethnicity, disease process and other factors. (Vulnerable Populations: Who Are They? , 2006) A first of its kind 2012 Gallup poll will help give a clearer picture. Poll results show 3. 5% of the U. S. population identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

On a state-by-state basis the distribution of this population doesn't vary significantly from the national percentage However, states considered to have more liberal views have higher percentages (Washington D. C. 10%, Hawaii 5. %) where states with more conservative views (North Dakota 1. 7%) are identified as having lower percentages. Gallup surveys have also shown the LGBT population to be " disproportionately young, female, and nonwhite" (Gates, G. J. , & Newport, F. , February 2013) Additionally, those among the LGBT population have less education, lower income, are more

likely to be in a domestic partnership or never married and reside on the east or west coast.

As a vulnerable population the LGBT populace may be slightly more unique than some because the group is a collection of marginalized populations within a population. (Institute of Medicine, 2011) HealthyPeople.gov cites research that identifies discrimination in health care as well as civil rights infringements for the LGBT Population (LGBT Health, 2013) The National Center for Transgender Equality references financial as well as discriminatory treatment in the health care setting as two of the top reasons this people group lacks adequate health care. (NCTE Health, 2011) While lack of social services and qualified healthcare providers place the elderly LGBT at risk the remainder of the LGBT population does not fair any better. Homelessness and suicide among LGBT youth, HIV/STD rates for gay men, obesity among lesbian women and bisexuals, tobacco, alcohol and drug use among all LGBT subgroups and HIV/STD, mental health, suicide and victimization among transgenders are all higher than the general population.

Unfortunately the only parameters found to be lower were insurance coverage among transgenders and cancer prevention among the lesbian population. (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health, 2013) In the case of lesbian and bisexual women, several obstacles to proper health care have been identified including the ability to obtain health insurance, the fear of discrimination and other incidents of poor outcomes related to providers.

As a result, this population has seen poorer outcomes in the areas of common cancer types due to the delay in receiving treatment. (Cancer Facts for Lesbians and Bisexual Women, 2009) The CDC identifies gays, bisexuals

and other men who have sex with men as being 2% of the population but over half of the HIV cases between 2008 and 2010. With a specific focus on prevention of HIV/AIDS among men having sex with men, all state health departments combined with eight larger city health departments in the U. S. are heavily funded by the Division of HIV/AIDS.

This funding combined with state, local government and community partnership is allowing the CDC to focus efforts to help encourage growth and outreach of programs which have proven to have the highest impact in the on prevention. (CDC, 2013) At a White House LGBT Conference on Health held February 2012, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius outlined the findings of the LGBT Coordinating Committee established in 2010 in response to White House requests to address LGBT health.

One outcome noted among the Committee findings; suggestive research indicating “ significant disparities in access to health care and health coverage”. Currently however there is a double-edged sword for this group as HHS reports also note that research in this area is new. (HHS LGBT Issues Coordinating Committee 2012 Report, n. d.) Consequently more work is needed to identify the barriers to effective, quality health care for the LGBT population.