

Factors affecting the health of older sexual and gender minorities

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

A special issue of LGBT Health includes the latest research, clinical practice innovations, and policy aimed at addressing disparities and enhancing healthcare for older LGBT populations. A collection of informative and insightful articles that contribute to the understanding of factors that affect the health of older gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans is published in LGBT Health.

Guest Editors Judith B. Bradford, PhD and Sean R. Cahill, PhD coordinated this special issue of LGBT Health. Included is an article entitled "[Health Indicators for Older Sexual Minorities: National Health Interview Survey, 2013-2014](#)," in which Christina Dragon, MSPH, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (Baltimore, MD) and coauthors from NORC at the University of Chicago (Bethesda, MD), KPMG (McLean, VA), and The Fenway Institute (Boston, MA) explored differences between older sexual minorities and heterosexuals across multiple health indicators. The researchers found better outcomes or health-related behaviors among sexual minorities for some of the indicators, but sexual minorities were more than twice as likely to report binge drinking compared with their heterosexual peers.

Stuart Michaels, PhD, NORC at the University of Chicago, IL and colleagues from NORC and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services coauthored the article entitled "[Improving Measures of Sexual and Gender Identity in English and Spanish to Identify LGBT Older Adults in Surveys](#)." They demonstrated that efforts to identify LGBT older adults may be hindered by language-related obstacles among non-LGBT Spanish speakers who might have difficulty understanding terms used to designate sexual identities.

In the article "[Transgender Medicare Beneficiaries and Chronic Conditions: Exploring Fee-for-Service Claims Data](#)," a team of authors from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and NORC at the University of Chicago (Bethesda, MD), led by Christina Dragon, MSPH,

report on differences in the [chronic conditions](#) burden between transgender and cisgender Medicare beneficiaries. Overall, transgender beneficiaries were found to have a greater burden of chronic conditions, and higher rates of asthma, autism spectrum disorder, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression, hepatitis, HIV, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders compared with cisgender beneficiaries. Transgender Medicare beneficiaries also had higher observed rates of potentially disabling mental health and neurological/chronic pain conditions.

"This special issue of *LGBT Health* highlights innovations in research, practice, and policy to improve healthcare and services for LGBT older adults. The articles in the issue contribute to our understanding of [health](#) disparities and resiliencies in these populations, and suggest ways to improve care and integrate support services to ensure healthy aging," says Guest Editor Sean Cahill, The Fenway Institute. "The timing of this special issue is important, as the federal government is rolling back sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination regulations and data collection. The special issue is dedicated to Judy Bradford, a leader in LGBT aging and *LGBT health* research, and to her vision of *LGBT health* and equality."

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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