

Study identifies ways to reduce cancer risk among LGBTQIA+ people

August 15 2024, by Maureen Perideaux



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Socioeconomic status, provider-patient relationships and rural living environments have been found to affect cancer screening behaviors for people LGBTQIA+ individuals, according to a recent study from Callie

Kluitenberg Harris, a Ph.D. candidate at the Michigan State University College of Nursing.

"With a better understanding of cancer screening discrepancies among [sexual minorities](#), the probability of finding a cancer early is greatly enhanced and ultimately reduces the risk of death from a late-stage diagnosis," Harris said.

Recently [published](#) in *LGBT Health*, the study found that determinants of health at all ecological levels are differentially associated with breast and cervical cancer screening participation among lesbian and bisexual people. Also, some individual and interpersonal determinants of health, such as race/ethnicity and identity disclosure in parental relationships, may affect [bisexual people](#) differently than those in other sexual minority groups.

While more research is needed, Harris recommends two steps that can begin addressing discrepancies in cancer screening.

"First, we can educate [health professionals](#) about how to care for LGBTQIA+ people and create safe places for health care," Harris said.

"People struggle to seek care when they fear they'll be discriminated against. If everyone who has contact with a patient—from appointment setters and receptionists to doctors and nurses—becomes comfortable talking to queer people, they could create a ripple effect to create better health outcomes.

"Secondly, our communities can help reduce disparities by having conversations about cancer screening," she added.

"If you know someone who doesn't seem to go to the doctor, ask them what barriers keep them from going. Often, they can't find a provider

they're comfortable with. Community members can share referrals for affirming health professionals. Taking this a step further, health advocacy organizations can develop lists of [health care](#) providers who offer a safe place for sexual minority patients."

More information: Callie Kluitenberg Harris et al, Relationships Among Determinants of Health, Cancer Screening Participation, and Sexual Minority Identity: A Systematic Review, *LGBT Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1089/lgbt.2023.0097](https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2023.0097)

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: Study identifies ways to reduce cancer risk among LGBTQIA+ people (2024, August 15) retrieved 16 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-ways-cancer-lgbtqia-people.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--