

4-18-2016

Health Disparities in the LGBTQ Populations

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Health Disparities in the LGBTQ Population

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Problem/Purpose

Individuals that identify within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community are at greater risk for increased health disparities and inequalities.

The purpose of this evidence review was to initiate the first steps of the evidence based practice (EBP) process: ask the clinical question, search the literature, critically appraise the evidence, and make a decision. The PICO(T) format was used to develop the following question: What strategies (I) can be employed to reduce health disparities and inequalities (O) in the LGBTQ community (P)?

Methods

- The databases Academic Search Premier, CINAHL, MEDLINE, Proquest Central, and LGBT Life were searched using the following terms: health inequalities, health disparities, lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, queer, and LGBTQ.
- The literature search was limited to articles published within ten years.
- The titles and/or abstracts from 27 articles were reviewed. A total of 25 articles were found to be relevant to the clinical issue and were leveled using the evaluation system by Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt (2005).

Results

- The level of evidence ranged from I-VII.
- LGBTQ individuals face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights.
- Strategies to reduce disparities and inequalities should be focused on understanding LGBTQ health and addressing the social determinants that impact health.
- Adopting a standardized method of reporting health disparities and inequalities within the LGBTQ community so that interventions can be effectively implemented to improve the overall health status of the LGBTQ population.

Access to health care and health insurance

Health Disparity #2: LGB adults are more likely to delay or not seek medical care



Impact of societal biases on mental health and well-being

Health Disparity #11: LGB adults are more likely to experience psychological distress



Health Disparity #12: LGB adults are more likely to need medication for emotional health issues



Significance

- Nearly 3.5% or approximately 9 million Americans identify as LGBTQ.
- The first step in reducing disparity and inequality is aimed at understanding how expansive this population is.
- The objective of Healthy People 2020 is to improve the health, safety, and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.
- Health care providers should be educated on caring for the unique needs of this population.
- Inclusion of the LGBTQ community (a sexual minority) in the National Healthcare Disparities Report under the Minority Health subheading and in the National Healthcare Quality Report would allow for organized recognition on a national level and provide state by state data on areas of improvement needed.

