

Examining Health Inequities Among Sexual and Gender Minority Older Adults

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(NIH/NIA R01AG026526)

Advancing Equity in Diagnostic Excellence to Reduce Health Disparities:
National Academies

September 23, 2024
Washington, D.C.

SGM Older Adults and Health Disparities

American Journal of PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Disparities Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Older Adults: Results From a Population-Based Study

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ABSTRACT

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

METHODS: We analyzed data from the 2003–2010 Washington State Behavioral Surveillance System ($n = 96,992$) on health outcomes, chronic conditions, access to care, 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 obesity, and gay and bisexual men had higher risk of chronic conditions than did heterosexuals. Lesbians reported a higher rate of excessive drinking than did bisexual men. Bisexual women and men reported a higher rate of diabetes and a lower rate of being tested for HIV than did heterosexuals.

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

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

American Journal of PUBLIC HEALTH

Disability Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults: Disparities in Prevalence and Risk

Karen I. Fredriksen-Goldsen, PhD, Hyun-Jun Kim, PhD, and Susan E. Barkan, PhD

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES: We used population-based data to comprehensively examine disability among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults.

METHODS: We estimated prevalence of disability and its covariates and compared by sexual orientation by utilizing data from the Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System ($n=82531$) collected in 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009. We used multivariate logistic regression to examine the relationship between disability and sexual orientation, after we controlled for covariates of disability.

RESULTS: Findings indicated that the prevalence of disability is higher among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults compared with their heterosexual counterparts; lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults with disabilities are significantly younger than heterosexual adults with disabilities. Higher disability prevalence among lesbians and among bisexual women and men remained significant after we controlled for covariates of disability.

CONCLUSIONS: Higher rates of disability among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults are of major concern. Efforts are needed to prevent, delay, and reduce disabilities as well as to improve the quality of life for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults with disabilities. Future prevention and intervention efforts need to address the unique concerns of these groups.

January 2012, Vol 102, No. 1, Research and Practice

Table 1. Chronic Conditions and Health Disparities by Sexual Orientation and Gender: Age 50 and Older, National Health Interview Survey, (2013-2014)

Health indicators	Women	Men
	LB vs. Heterosexual (ref) AOR ^c (95% CI)	GB vs. Heterosexual (ref) AOR ^c (95% CI)
Chronic Conditions		
Stroke	2.12*** (1.57, 2.87)	0.56 (0.27, 1.17)
Heart Attack	2.28*** (1.58, 3.29)	1.08 (0.83, 1.40)
Angina Pectoris	1.29 (0.88, 1.90)	1.69** (1.21, 2.35)
High Blood Pressure	0.88 (0.74, 1.04)	0.94 (0.80, 1.10)
COPD	1.08 (0.83, 1.41)	1.06 (0.71, 1.57)
Asthma	1.28** (1.12, 1.53)	1.06 (0.77, 1.44)
Arthritis	1.57*** (1.32, 1.88)	0.84 (0.71, 1.01)
Low Back/Neck Pain	1.78*** (1.46, 2.17)	1.21* (1.04, 1.41)
Diabetes	0.77* (0.63, 0.96)	0.85 (0.68, 1.07)
Obesity	1.18 (0.98, 1.41)	<i>0.67*** (0.55, 0.80)</i>
Cancer	1.07 (0.88, 1.30)	1.41*** (1.17, 1.69)
Weakened Immune System	1.69** (1.16, 2.46)	3.16*** (2.25, 4.43)
General Health, Poor	1.75*** (1.36, 2.24)	1.18 (0.94, 1.47)
Disability	1.57*** (1.32, 1.87)	1.46*** (1.22, 1.75)
Cognitive impairment	1.83** (1.25, 2.68)	1.18 (0.94, 1.47)
Limitations in ADL	0.34*** (0.20, 0.59)	2.64*** (1.82, 3.82)
Limitations in IADL	1.30 (0.93, 1.82)	1.87** (1.31, 2.66)
Mental Distress	1.33** (1.08, 1.63)	1.64*** (1.29, 2.08)

Aging with Pride: National Health, Aging, and Sexuality/Gender Study (NHAS)

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- 2,450 SGM adults (birth year \leq 1964)
- Dual sampling frame
 - 17 organizations across all U.S. census divisions
 - Social network clustering of subgroups
- Stratification: sex, gender, age, race/ethnicity, region
- Survey, in-person assessment and biological markers
- Two-step post-survey adjustment (Lee & Valliant, 2009)
- Five time points: 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022
- High retention rates: 94% 2016, 88% 2018, 85% 2020



Health Equity Promotion Model (HEPM)

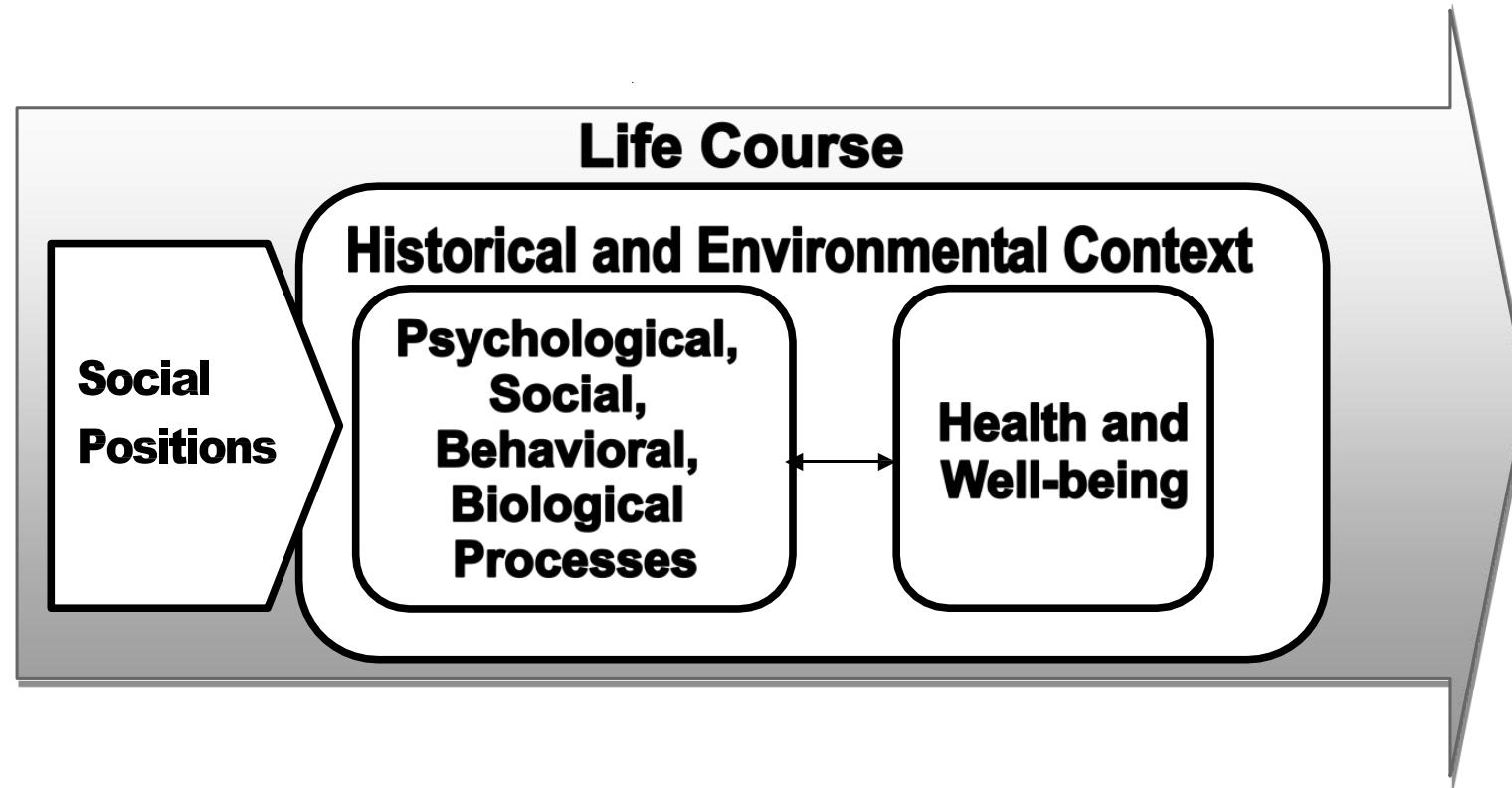


Table 2. Unweighted and Weighted Demographic Characteristics Compared to Estimates from NHIS, HRS, and ACS

	Lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults aged 50 and older			Adults aged 50 and older and living with same-sex partner				
	Aging with Pride: NHAS (n = 2450)		NHIS (n = 632)	Aging with Pride: NHAS (n = 778)		HRS (n = 140)	NHIS (n = 147)	ACS (n = 4134)
	unweighted % (n)	weighted % (SE)	weighted % (SE)	unweighted % (n)	weighted % (SE)	weighted % (SE)	weighted % (SE)	weighted % (SE)
Sexual Identity								
Lesbian or Gay	85.97 (2,102)	72.26 (1.62)	71.56 (2.56)	95.37 (742)	89.15 (1.99)	--	85.23 (4.09)	--
Bisexual/Others	14.03 (343)	27.74 (1.62)	28.44 (2.56)	4.63 (36)	10.85 (1.99)	--	14.77 (4.09)	--
Sex								
Female	41.74 (995)	46.13 (1.69)	48.79 (2.91)	49.10 (382)	51.05 (2.86)	45.55 (2.32)	58.47 (5.33)	49.97 (2.26)
Male	58.26 (1389)	53.87 (1.69)	51.21 (2.91)	50.90 (396)	48.95 (2.86)	54.45 (2.32)	41.53 (5.33)	50.03 (2.26)
Age Group								
50-64	44.53 (1092)	70.18 (1.35)	74.93 (2.50)	48.59 (378)	72.79 (2.20)	79.59 (3.83)	84.12 (3.63)	69.22 (1.68)
65+	55.47 (1358)	29.82 (1.35)	25.07 (2.50)	51.41 (400)	27.21 (2.20)	20.41 (3.83)	15.88 (3.63)	30.78 (1.68)
Race								
White	81.96 (1,995)	82.30 (1.33)	87.16 (1.52)	86.69 (671)	88.20 (2.14)	84.61 (3.51)	96.20 (1.12)	88.47 (0.91)
Black	9.29 (226)	9.59 (1.03)	9.23 (1.28)	6.85 (53)	4.86 (1.49)	4.96 (1.83)	3.45 (1.08)	5.42 (0.49)
Others	8.75 (213)	8.11 (0.97)	3.50 (0.9)	6.46 (50)	6.94 (1.66)	10.42 (3.08)	0.34 (0.30)	6.10 (0.78)
Ethnicity, Hispanic	6.91 (168)	9.05 (1.04)	9.27 (1.84)	3.87 (30)	7.27 (1.88)	8.53 (2.76)	10.40 (4.1)	7.52 (0.58)

Access and Quality of Care Disparities

- Access and barriers to care
- Utilization
- Quality of care
- Multidimensional approach
 - Patient factors
 - Provider factors
 - System/structural factors

Table 3. Patient Factors, SGM Heath Literacy and Help-Seeking

		Sexual identity					Gender identity			Gender			
		Total	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Diverse	F	Trans	Cis	F	Women	Men	Non-Binary
Health literacy, <i>M (SE)</i>	3.06 (.02)	3.11 (.03)	3.08 (.03)	3.02 (.05)	2.93 (.07)*	2.2	2.89 (.06)**	3.10 (.02)	11.3***	3.06 (.03)	3.09 (.03)	2.83 (.08)**	4.5*
Help-seeking, % (CI)													
Obtain	82.5 (79.8,85.0)	83.8 (79.8,87.1)	82.4 (77.5,86.4)	85.2 (77.5,90.6)	74.0* (62.8,82.8)	1.5	74.5* (65.4,81.8)	84.2 (81.4,86.6)	6.1*	82.0 (77.6,85.7)	85.1 (81.6,88.0)	64.6* (47.5,78.6)	4.6**
Comfort	85.4 (82.7,87.8)	88.3 (84.5,91.3)	85.2 (80.1,89.1)	84.5 (76.2,90.2)	77.9* (66.7,86.1)	1.9	79.3* (70.4,86.0)	86.8 (84.0,89.2)	4.1*	83.9 (79.2,87.6)	88.4 (84.9,91.1)	73.0 (56.7,84.8)	4.0*
Confidence	78.2 (75.2,80.9)	75.7 (71.1,86.3)	82.3* (77.5,86.3)	78.6 (70.0,85.2)	75.4 (63.9,84.1)	1.5	74.5 (65.3,82.0)	78.8 (75.6,81.6)	1.0	81.8 (77.4,85.5)	75.9* (71.7,79.6)	72.8 (55.1,85.3)	2.3

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 4. SGM Health Support Available by Confidante in Network

	Total	Sexual identity					Gender identity			Gender			
		Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Diverse	X^2 or F	Trans	Cis	X^2 or F	Women	Men	Non-Binary	X^2 or F
No health support, % (CI)	6.7 (4.4, 10.1)	7.1 (3.9, 12.3)	3.8 (1.4, 9.8)	8.3 (2.7, 22.9)	12.5 (3.1, 38.7)	2.5	5.6 (0.8, 30.8)	6.8 (4.4, 10.3)	0.04	5.0 (2.3, 10.7)	7.5 (4.5, 12.3)	0.0	1.1
# of health supports, M (SE)	2.51 (.08)	2.43 (.12)	2.77 (.13)	2.47 (.22)	1.81 (.31)	2.8*	2.39 (.35)	2.51 (.08)	0.1	2.69 (.12)	2.41 (.10)	2.20 (.73)	1.6
Likelihood to use support confidante, M (SE)	2.48 (.03)	2.48 (.04)	2.58 (.04)	2.35 (.08)	2.21 (.15)*	4.8**	2.50 (.13)	2.48 (.03)	0.02	2.55 (.04)	2.45 (.03)	2.38 (.21)	1.9

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 5. Provider-Patient Relationship and SGM Adverse Experiences in Care

% (CI)	Total	Sexual identity				χ^2 or F	Gender identity			Gender			
		Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Diverse		Trans	Cis	χ^2 or F	Women	Men	Non-Binary	χ^2 or F
Understanding	87.3 (84.7,89.5)	89.9 (86.2,92.7)	85.7 (80.8,89.6)	88.5 (71.3,88.8)	81.6* (71.3,88.8)	1.7	84.7 (76.4,90.4)	87.8 (85.0,90.1)	0.8	85.8 (81.5,89.3)	89.4 (86.1,92.)	83.3 (67.4,92.3)	1.4
Time Spent	76.6 (73.6,79.3)	80.5 (76.4,84.1)	75.2 (69.7,80.0)	73.1 (64.0,80.6)	73.0 (62.5,81.4)	1.7	73.1 (64.0,80.6)	77.3 (74.2,80.2)	0.9	74.1 (69.2,78.5)	80.2* (76.5,83.5)	62.8 (46.0,77.0)	4.2*
Trust	61.1 (57.8,64.3)	68.2 (63.6,72.6)	58.2** (52.4,63.8)	56.4* (47.2,65.2)	53.8* (42.5,64.6)	4.1**	55.9 (46.3,65.1)	62.2 (58.7,65.5)	1.5	56.9 (51.7,61.9)	67.1** (62.7,71.1)	42.8 (27.8,59.2)	7.2***
Disrespect	14.4 (12.1,17.0)	10.1 (7.5,13.5)	15.1 (11.4,19.8)	16.4 (10.4,24.9)	24.6** (16.2,35.5)	4.1**	22.4** (15.4,31.4)	12.7 (10.5,15.4)	6.9**	16.9 (13.2,21.4)	10.9* (8.4,14.0)	26.5 (14.5,43.5)	5.1**
Unfair treatment	7.4 (5.8,9.4)	7.8 (5.5,10.9)	5.1 (3.1,8.3)	10.6 (5.9,18.4)	7.9 (3.8,15.5)	1.3	7.0 (3.6,13.2)	7.5 (5.7,9.7)	0.03	6.8 (4.5,10.1)	8.3 (6.1,11.2)	5.1 (1.3,18.5)	0.5
Care Denied, 12 months	8.7 (6.8,11.0)	8.1 (5.6,11.8)	3.7* (2.0,6.6)	14.2 (8.7,22.4)	15.1 (8.9,24.6)	5.5**	25.7*** (18.3,34.9)	5.2 (3.8,7.2)	51.2***	7.1 (4.7,10.5)	9.1 (6.6,12.5)	16.8 (7.6,33.3)	2.1
Care Denied, Lifetime	17.3 (14.9,20.1)	16.3 (13.0,20.4)	10.7* (7.9,14.2)	23.2 (16.4,31.9)	29.9** (20.9,40.9)	7.3***	43.2*** (34.2,52.5)	12.2 (10.2,14.6)	69.1***	13.9 (10.7,17.8)	17.3 (14.1,21.1)	44.3*** (29.5,60.3)	9.8***

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 6. Additional System/Structural Barriers to Care

% (CI)	Total	Sexual identity					Gender identity			Gender			
		Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Diverse	F	Trans	Cis	F	Women	Men	Non-Binary	F
No insurance	5.3 (3.8,7.4)	3.3 (1.8,6.0)	5.0 (2.8,8.6)	10.0** (5.7,17.0)	3.2 (0.9,10.5)	2.9*	6.3 (3.0,12.8)	5.1 (3.6,7.1)	0.3	5.9 (3.7,9.1)	4.3 (2.6,6.8)	5.9 (1.5,20.6)	0.4
Care unavailable in Area	18.5 (15.9,21.5)	14.5 (11.2,18.6)	16.9 (12.7,22.0)	24.9* (17.8,33.7)	25.3* (16.6,36.6)	3.1*	33.9*** (25.4,43.5)	15.3 (12.8,18.3)	19.8***	19.9 (15.8,24.6)	15.6 (12.4,19.3)	29.1 (16.3,46.4)	2.6
No SGM Friendly Care	24.8 (21.9,27.8)	21.4 (17.6,25.6)	26.9 (22.0,32.5)	30.0 (22.4,39.0)	25.5 (17.1,36.2)	1.7	33.0* (24.9,42.3)	23.3 (20.4,26.4)	4.8*	27.7 (23.3,32.7)	22.1 (18.6,26.1)	28.9 (16.5,45.5)	1.9
Cost of Care	23.0 (20.2,26.1)	19.9 (16.1,24.3)	24.9 (20.1,30.3)	22.1 (15.4,30.7)	32.2* (22.6,43.6)	2.0	33.0** (24.7,42.4)	21.3 (18.5,24.4)	7.0**	24.5 (20.3,29.3)	20.6 (17.1,24.7)	37.3 (23.0,54.3)	2.8
Cost of Meds	16.8 (14.3,19.5)	15.9 (12.4,20.0)	20.6 (16.1,26.0)	13.2 (8.1,20.7)	17.1 (10.2,27.3)	1.3	18.3 (12.1,26.7)	16.7 (14.1,19.7)	0.2	17.9 (14.2,22.3)	16.1 (12.9,19.9)	18.9 (8.9,35.9)	0.3

Past 12 months

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Intersectional Disparities

- Racial/ethnic SGM disparities
- Socio-economic SGM disparities
- Disability SGM disparities
- Geographic and rural SGM disparities



Implications for Diagnostic Excellence

- Enhance access and utilization of care
- Investigate diagnostic disparities
- Attend to the heterogeneity of the community
- Use of health records/objective measures of care
- Address explicit and implicit bias in care
- Investigate health care trajectories
- Identify modifiable mechanisms
- Develop of culturally responsive interventions



Intervention Development: IDEA & Safe Home

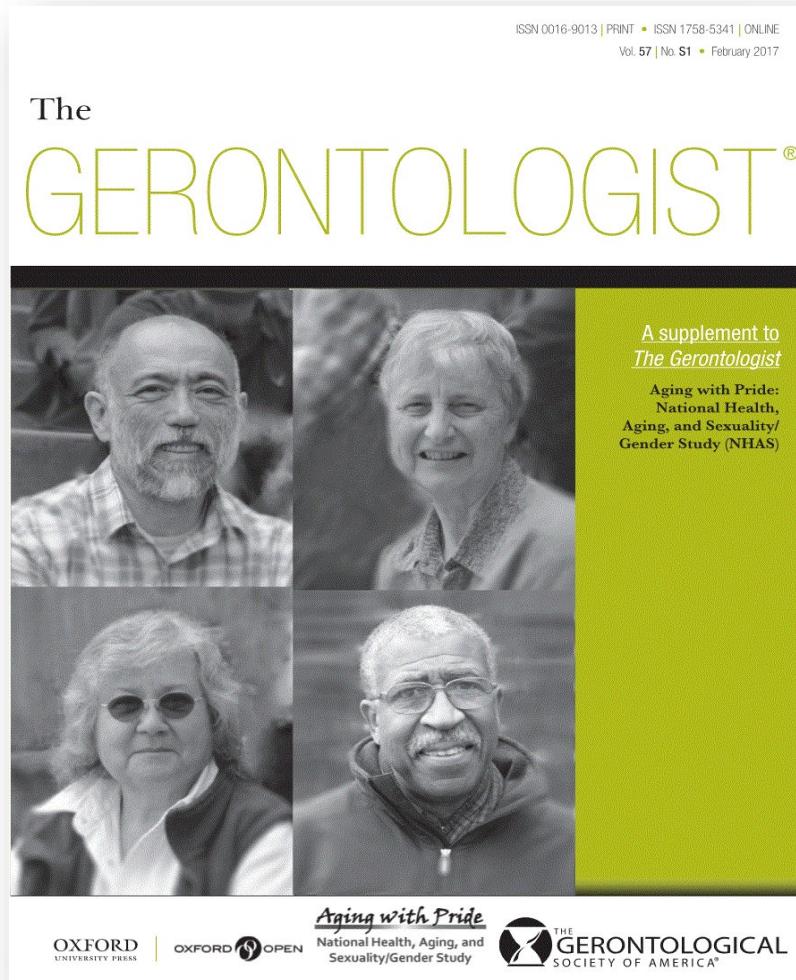
- First randomized controlled trial (RCT) (MPI Fredriksen-Goldsen, Teri, MPI (R01AG055488). SGM ADRD/care partners. Efficacious stigma reduction cognitive behavioral culturally tailored intervention
- Safe Home: First evidenced based training program to address the needs of SGM older adults and underserved communities in long term care. DSHS, Fredriksen Goldsen, PI (67-3999)



Fredriksen-Goldsen, K., Teri, L., Kim, H.-J., La Fazia, D., McKenzie, G., Petros, R., Jung, H. H., Jones, B. R., Brown, C., & Emlet, C. A. (2023). Design and development of the first randomized controlled trial of an intervention (IDEA) for sexual and gender minority older adults living with dementia and care partners. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 128, 107143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2023.107143>

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Resources



www.GoldsenInstitute.org/agingwithpride

Publications, resources, and information
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Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I. (Supplement Ed.) (2017). LGBT aging emerging from the margins - Aging with Pride: National Health, Aging and Sexuality/Gender Study [Supplemental issue]. *The Gerontologist*, 57(S1).