



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations in Australia: An analysis of the Queensland Suicide Register

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Abstract

Introduction

Sexual orientation is seldom recorded at death in Australia, and to date there have been no studies on the relationship between those that have died by suicide and sexuality or minority gender identity in Australia. The aim of the present study is to determine whether or not lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), and intersex individuals who die by suicide constitute a unique subpopulation of those who die by suicide, when compared with non-lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex suicide deaths.

Methods

The Queensland Suicide Register holds records of all suicides in Queensland since 1990. All cases from 2000 to 2009 (inclusive; a total of 5,966 cases) were checked for potential indicators of individuals' sexual orientation and gender identification. A total of 35 lesbian ($n = 10$), gay ($n = 22$), bisexual ($n = 2$), and transgender ($n = 1$) suicide cases were identified. Three comparison cases of non-LGBT suicides for each LGBT suicide were then located, matched by age and gender. Conditional logistic regression was used to calculate odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals.

Results

It was significantly more likely that depression was mentioned in the cases of LGBT suicides than in non-LGBT cases. While 12.4% of the comparison group had been diagnosed with psychotic disorders, there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals. LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often, with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases.

Discussion

Despite its limitations, this study – the first of its kind in Australia – seems to indicate that LGBT people would require targeted approaches in mental and general health services.

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