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Research paper

Demographic and psychosocial factors associated with recent suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, and asexual (LGBQ) people in Australia: Correlates of suicidality among LGBQ Australians

Anthony Lyons ^a, Adam O. Hill ^a  , Ruth McNair ^b, Marina Carman ^a, Sally Morris ^c, Adam Bourne ^{a, d}

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Highlights

- High levels of recent suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among LGBQ people.
- Bisexual and queer identifying people report higher levels of suicidal ideation.
- Recent suicide attempt associated with social exclusion or harassment.
- Lower odds of recent suicide attempt if people feel part of LGBTIQ community.

Abstract

Introduction

To examine demographic and psychosocial correlates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among a large cross-section of sexual orientation populations in Australia, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, and asexual (LGBQ) people.

Methods

A national survey was conducted involving 5,174 cisgender LGBQ participants aged 18+ years. Multivariable regressions identified factors associated with recent suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.

Results

In all, 37.2% reported suicidal ideation and 3.9% a suicide attempt in the past 12 months. The likelihood of suicidal ideation was greater for those who identified as queer or felt treated unfairly or socially excluded due to their sexual orientation, and lower for those in a committed relationship, who felt part of LGBTIQ communities, or felt accepted in family, work, and health services. The likelihood of suicide attempts was greater for those aged younger or had recently experienced verbal abuse or social exclusion, and lower for those in a committed relationship or who felt part of LGBTIQ communities.

Limitations

Participants were recruited largely through paid Facebook advertising and the sample may therefore not be representative of all LGBQ adults in Australia. However, a representative population-level study would require the collection of population demographic data to provide the necessary and sexual identity is not included in the Australian Census.

Conclusion

These findings highlight an urgent need for supporting LGBQ people and may help inform tailored support services, including culturally-safe suicide prevention programs. These could involve peer support, trauma-informed counselling, supporting committed relationships, and addressing marginalization in the wider community.

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Keywords

Suicide; Suicide attempt; Suicidal ideation; LGBQ; Australia

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