

Gender disparities in the mental health of gay and lesbian adults

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INTRODUCTION

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) adults face increased risks of poor mental health compared to heterosexual adults
- Gender disparities in mental health of adults from sexual minorities are underexplored
- This study investigates how stigma related to age and sexual orientation is associated with mental health of lesbian and gay (LG) adults aged 50+

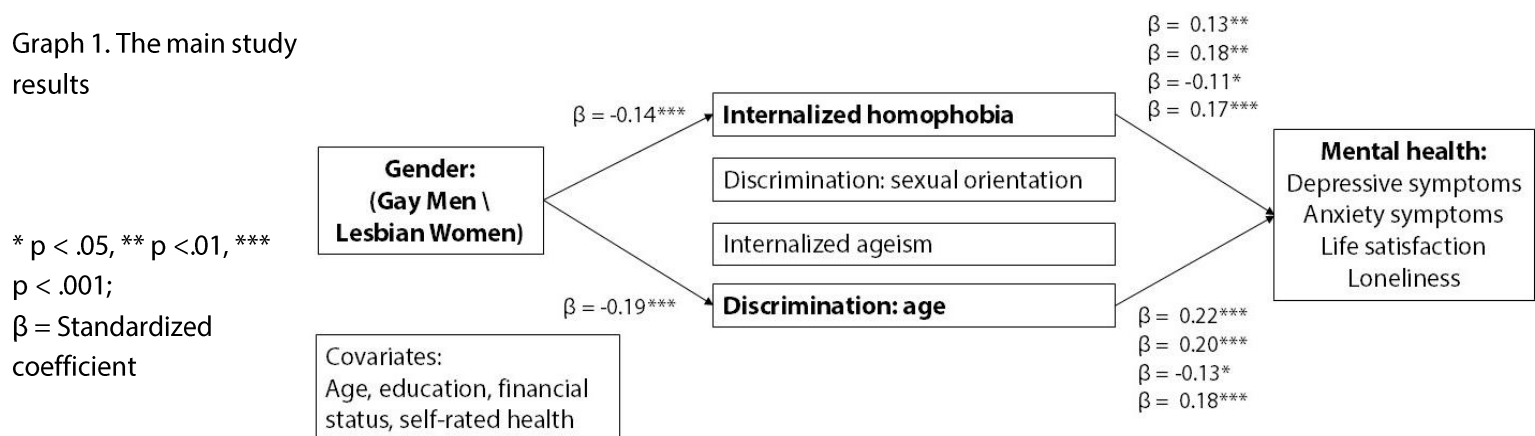
METHODS

- N=411 Israeli LGs aged 50+ (age range: 50-85); Online survey

RESULTS

- Lesbian women reported better mental health compared to gay men
- The gender difference was partially explained by gendered experiences of ageism and homophobia: Women experienced less enacted ageism and reported lower internalized homophobia, and these were related to better mental health (lower depressive and anxiety symptoms, less loneliness, higher life satisfaction)

Graph 1. The main study results



DISCUSSION

The greater mental health challenges faced by gay men in later life may stem, in part, from higher exposure to age-based discrimination and greater internalization of negative societal attitudes toward their sexual orientation—potentially reflecting the cumulative impact of lifelong stigma.

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