Exploring the Intersections of Age and Sexuality: Concerns Among LGBTQ+ Older Adults about Moving from Independent Living to Residential Care.

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Introduction

- Population aging is happening during a time of significant social and cultural change.

- LGBTQ+ older adults were born, raised, and have aged during a time when discrimination due to sexual orientation was prevalent.

- LGBTQ+ older adults have many concerns about aging

- Living in Residential Care is a central concern
Residential Care

Systemic heteronormativity
- The idea that binary gender identity and heterosexual orientation are the norm

Discrimination

Fear of Disclosure
This paper focuses on exploring the concerns that older LGBTQ+ people have about living in residential care facilities.

What is the evidence that LGBTQ+ older adults are concerned about receiving queer-competent care when moving from independent living to residential care?
Methodology
Search Plan & Selection

1. A hierarchy of evidence and inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed.

2. A keyword search was conducted in relevant health and social science databases to locate relevant literature.
Critical Appraisal

The Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) Qualitative Checklist
Thematic Analysis

Identified common themes by manually highlighting recurring words, expressions and phrase.

Further analysis conducted using NVivo12.

- Text search queries
Data Synthesis

A data synthesis matrix was generated using NVivo12 to compare themes across each study without removing the data from its original context.

NVivo

- Matrix coding queries
- Text search queries
Synthesis using NVivo

Text Search Query - Results Preview

- by being gay and so “
- energy on activities such as
- having to go back into
- findings speak to emotional work –
- burdened with the work
- resulting in particular strategies
- liberation movement, this
- must see the
- threats. Some participants spoke about
- to cope with discrimination by
- were associated with this category:

- assessment environments, and placating others
- as an understandable outcome of
- identity; assessing their environments for
- must be seen as an
- parts of their identity, assessing

of hiding

their

identity (i.e., removing
when caregivers came
lives.” They expressed a
sexual orientation. They do
to survive, tomorrow’s gay and
when they begin to require
Synthesis using NVivo
Results
Five main themes were identified:
1. Discrimination
2. Vulnerability
3. Relationship with partner
4. Disclosing sexual identity
5. Heterosexual norms and assumptions.
Discrimination

Concerns regarding discrimination arose in all studies.

Two types of discrimination:

1. Covert
2. Overt

*Figure 3: Coding for covert and overt discrimination based on gender*
Vulnerability

This theme provides insight about how the intersection of old age and sexual orientation impact LGBTQ+ older adults perceptions of care.

Across all studies, LGBTQ+ older adults were concerned that as they age and their health declines, they will be more vulnerable to discrimination.

This vulnerability appeared to stem from the perceived inability to stand up for themselves or their partners if they were to be discriminated against.
Relationship with Partner’s

“Let’s say that we both had to go. Would we be living together? Could we hold hands? Could we put our arms around each other watching television when everybody else is straight? I mean, socially it would be totally uncomfortable. What would it be like if my partner came to visit? How would we visit that would be acceptable to the rest of the facility?”

(Furlotte et al., 2016)
Disclosing Sexual Identity

I suppose I can’t imagine being in a place where everybody around you would not know that you had spent all of your life as a lesbian, I mean that would be, there is no point in living, that would be the worst thing for me if you had to be completely in the closet with nobody knowing about you and you couldn’t talk about your life...

(Participant, Willis et al., 2016).
Heterosexual Norms and Assumptions

Heteronormativity: being perceived as straight when entering residential care facilities.

Heterosexist Environment: always being around straight people, only having access to resources and other forms of media that are targeted at heterosexual people, having to listen to straight narratives, and having no social connection to the LGBTQ+ community.
Older adults are concerned about experiencing discrimination in residential care facilities.
- gender and age may inform concerns
- compounded effects of experiencing age-related decline

Recognition and acknowledgement of LGBTQ+ identities and same-sex relationships.

Policy Change.

Training.
Strengths & Limitations

- The data analysis methodology used generated findings that are robust and transparent.
- One analyst
- Limited literature & missing perspectives
Next Steps
IFA Conference 2018

Addressing Inequalities

- Older LGBTQI
- Older Migrants
- Older Refugees
- Older Prisoners
- Older Women
- Older Homeless Persons
- Older Indigenous Persons

When returning to the closet is your only choice...

Many LGBTQI persons fear
giving into assisted living centers
and long term care facilities.
They often feel they must hide
their identities and purposes
to stay safe from abuse
and discrimination.

Go to egale.ca/seniors
for resources and training opportunities.

Egale
Canada Human Rights Trust

Leola, 61
died

Living your independence
shouldn’t mean losing your identity.
Grey Literature
References


Westwood, S. (2016). 'We see it as being heterosexualised, being put into a care home': Gender, sexuality and housing/care preferences among older LGBTI individuals in the UK. Health & Social Care in the Community, 24(6), 155-163.


