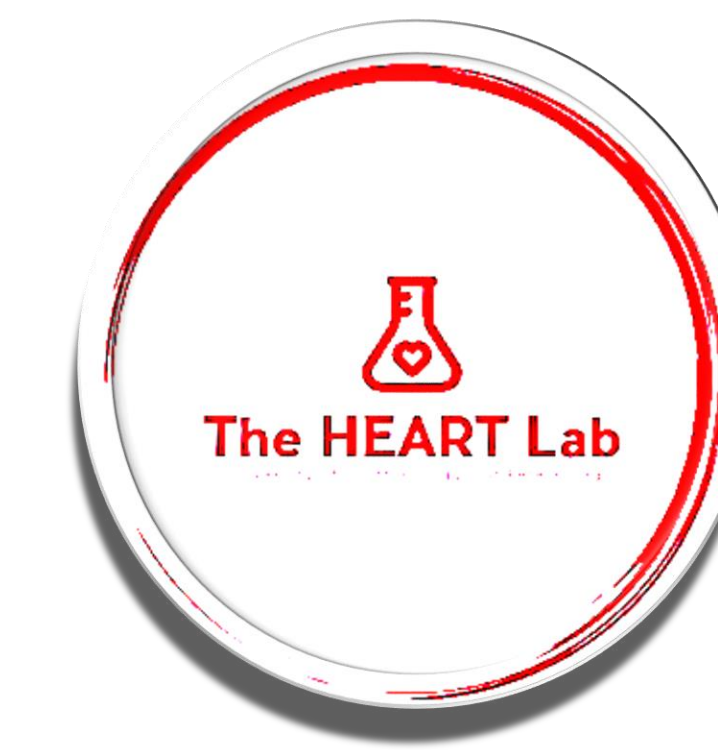


Comparing mental health and drinking between bisexual and homosexual individuals at the onset of COVID-19

Christine Grossman, Lindsey M. Rodriguez, & Hannah Bradham
University of South Florida



Introduction

- ❖ This sample was compared to heterosexual individuals of the same age and gender and showed that there was a significant difference in mental health and drinking show sexual minorities suffer more than their heterosexual matches (Grossman et al, 2020).
 - ❖ In a study measuring depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, and suicidality contributing to decreased mental health in sexual minorities compared to heterosexual individuals, with bisexual individuals having the worst distress of all the sexual minorities (Jorm et al, 2002).
 - ❖ Bisexual individuals showed a significantly higher number of drinks per occasion (Trocki et al, 2005).
- Hypothesis:** Bisexual individuals are more likely to suffer from mental distress and substance abuse compared to homosexual individuals during the onset of COVID.



Results

Variable	Homosexual M (SD)	Bisexual M (SD)	T-value	Pr > t
Depression	2.09 (.97)	2.50 (1.06)	-2.05	.0433**
Anxiety	2.05 (.94)	2.37 (.93)	-1.71	.0906
Perceived Stress	1.74 (.76)	1.75 (.69)	-0.00	.9989
COVID threat	4.03 (1.93)	4.59 (1.77)	-1.51	.1331
COVID finance	3.60 (2.15)	3.29 (2.06)	0.73	.4663
COVID resource	3.70 (2.05)	4.09 (1.89)	-0.97	.3324
COVID psych	3.59 (2.03)	3.78 (1.97)	-0.48	.6315
Drinking to deal with COVID	3.24 (1.85)	3.96 (2.06)	-1.82	.0711
Conflict due to COVID	2.80 (1.83)	3.00 (1.95)	-0.54	.5905
Stress due to COVID	4.00 (2.09)	4.64 (1.93)	-1.61	.1106
Drinking to cope with depression	2.06 (1.18)	2.70 (1.27)	-2.59	.0111**
Drinking to cope with anxiety	2.54 (1.03)	3.17 (1.17)	-2.86	.0052**

**=significant

Discussion

- ❖ Although our hypothesis was not supported with a more stringent analysis, I find it more interesting that this sample did not show the expected differences.
 - ❖ When batch, gender, and age were not corrected for with a less conservative approach there was a difference seen in depression, anxiety, and drinking to cope.
 - ❖ However, in a more conservative approach that difference disappears.
- Limitations:**
- ❖ With a population of only 100 LGB individuals it is possible that the effect cannot be determined because the sample is not large enough.
- Future Directions:**
- ❖ With a larger sample size, it may be easier to see the effects that were expected.
 - ❖ With sexual minorities historically suffering more emotional/mental distress and substance abuse is this exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19 directly?

Methods

Participants

- ❖ N=100 (49 homosexual, 51 bisexual)
- ❖ Age range 22-85 with a mean of 43.14 (SD=12.08)

Procedures

- ❖ Participants were Qualtrics Panelist and filled out a survey.

Measures

- ❖ **Perceived Stress Scale - Short** (PSSS; Cohen & Williamson): participants were asked how often during the past month that they had experienced symptoms such as “In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?” on a scale of never (0) to very often (4).
- ❖ **Mood and Anxiety Symptom Questionnaire** (MASQ; Watson & Clark, 1991): items on anxiety and depression symptoms during the past month such as “felt uneasy” and “blamed myself for a lot of things” were scaled not at all (1) to extremely (5).

References

- ❖ Cohen, S. et al. (1988). Perceived stress in a probability sample of the U.S. In S. Spacapan & S. Oskamp (Eds.), *The social psychology of health: Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- ❖ Grossman, C. et al. (2020) Mental health, drinking, and employment of LGB individuals during COVID-19. Under Review *THRIVE USF Undergraduate Research Journal*.
- ❖ Jorm, A. et al. (2002). Sexual orientation and mental health: Results from a community survey of young and middle – aged adults. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 180(5), 423-427. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.180.5.423>
- ❖ Trocki, K. F. et al.. (2005). Use of heavier drinking contexts among heterosexuals, homosexuals and bisexuals: Results from a National Household Probability Survey. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 66(1), 105–110. <https://doi.org/10.15288/jsa.2005.66.105>
- ❖ Watson, D. et al. (1991). The mood and anxiety symptom questionnaire. Unpublished manuscript, University of Iowa, Department of Psychology, Iowa City.