

Circumstances of Suicide Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals

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Introduction: Suicide rates for sexual minorities are higher than the heterosexual population. The purpose of this study is to explore circumstances surrounding suicide completion to inform future intervention strategies for suicide among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

Materials and Methods: We completed an analysis of data from the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) from 2013-2017. Victims identified as transgender were considered separately. We stratified analysis by identified sex of the victim for the LGB population.

Results: Of the 16,831 victims whose sexual orientation or transgender status was known: 3886 (23.1%) were identified as female, 12,945 (76.9%) were identified as male. 479 (2.8%) were identified as LGBT; of these, 53 (11%) were transgender. LGBT victims were younger than non-LGBT victims. Male LGB victims were more likely to have a history of prior suicide attempts, past or current mental illness diagnosis, and were less likely to use firearms than male heterosexual victims. Female LGB victims were more likely to have problems in an intimate partner relationship than heterosexual women, while LGB men were more likely to have problems in family or other relationships. Transgender victims were again more likely to have mental health problems and a history of prior attempts, but less likely to have intimate partner problems and more likely to have a history of child abuse.

Conclusions: These results highlight the importance of promoting suicide interventions that recognize the complex intersection between stated gender, sex, and sexuality and the different cultural impacts these identities can have.