Survey of Older Minnesotans: LGB Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is one of several documents written to share the results of the 2015 Survey of Older Minnesotans (SOM). In 2015, the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA), in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, conducted a statewide survey of persons age 50 and older in Minnesota. The MBA conducts this survey approximately every five to ten years to monitor the changing needs, assets and expectations of older persons in the state. This information is used to improve the design and targeting of public programs for older persons and to help researchers and policy makers better understand Minnesota’s older population. Older adults or people will be used throughout this fact sheet to refer to those who were surveyed. This fact sheet reports on differences from survey respondents who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) and those who identify as straight. Where these differences are statistically significant is noted (see the section called Data Notes for additional information about how the level of significance was determined).

For more information on the Survey of Older Minnesotans, visit the MBA website at http://www.mnaging.net/en/Advisor/SurveyOlderMN.aspx

### Age Distribution

**Figure 1. Older adults by age who identify as LGB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>All Older Adults</th>
<th>LGB Older Adults</th>
<th>Proportion LGB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Geographic Area**

A higher proportion of older adults identifying as LGB live in the Twin Cities Metro area (83%) than Greater Minnesota (17%). This is significantly different\(^1\) from those identifying as straight who are split evenly between the Metro and Greater Minnesota.

![Figure 2. More people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual live in the Metro Area](image)

**Caregiving**

The survey asked older adults to answer two questions about caregiving: 1) Are you currently caring for or giving assistance to someone because of an injury, disability, medical condition, or inability to care for themselves? (Providing care for others) and 2) Do you have someone who would take care of you if you were sick or disabled? (Prospective caregiver).

The difference between people who provide care to someone and identify as LGB (26%) and those who identify as straight (15%) is significant\(^1\).

There is also a difference\(^2\) in having a prospective caregiver between those identify as LGB (Yes: 76%, Don’t Know: 4%, No: 20%) and those who identify as straight (Yes: 89%, Don’t Know: 4%, No: 8%).

![Figure 3. Fewer people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual have a prospective caregiver](image)
Health and Wellness

The survey asks individuals if they need assistance with any of six different independent activities of daily living (IADLs; including preparing meals, shopping for groceries, managing money, heavy and light housework, and getting outside) and four activities of daily living (ADLs; including getting dressed, personal care, getting out of bed or a chair, and using the toilet). When comparing older adults who need assistance with any of these activities, there is not a statistically significant difference between those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (37%) and those who identify as straight (24%).

Older adults who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual reported that depression is a problem more frequently (26%) than those who identify as straight (7%). Anxiety or stress also was reported as a problem more frequently by those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (28%) than those who identify as straight (14%). Both of these differences between these groups is statistically significant.

Reports of having feelings of loneliness was not found to have a statistically significant difference between the two groups (LGB: 9%, Straight: 5%).

Household Composition

Living arrangements among older adults identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are significantly different than those identifying as straight. This may be important as those living alone may have less support emotionally, financially, and physically if they have difficulties with daily living tasks.

Figure 4. People who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual report different household composition

Transportation

Older adults identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were more likely to have had difficulties getting somewhere due to transportation than those identifying as straight (LGB: 17%; Straight: 8%). This difference is significant.
Unable to Live Independently

Older adults were asked what they would do if they were no longer able to live independently. The results did not show a statistically significant\(^2\) difference between the two groups. In both groups, staying at home and bringing in services or moving to assisted living were top choices.

Data Notes

The overall proportion of Survey of Older Minnesotans respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual is 1.2%. The Williams Institute reports that approximately 3.5\(^3\)% of adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. One possible explanation for this difference is that the older individuals who completed our survey may feel less comfortable answering that they identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual than the general population.

The Survey of Older Minnesotans is a broad survey of individuals age 50 and older living in Minnesota and is not intended to specifically sample the lesbian, gay, or bisexual communities so the number of people identifying as LGB is small (N=46). This small sample size limits our ability to compare the LGB population to the straight population. The 95% significance level was used for all tests and confidence intervals. Even in cases where tests do not show a significant difference between the populations, there could be a difference but it is not shown in the data due to the small sample size. Where the difference is significant it is noted with either a 1, 2, or 3. These numbers correspond to the following tests or source document:

1. Using chi-squared test – those who refused or responded “Don’t Know” were excluded
2. Using Fisher’s exact test – those who refused or responded “Don’t Know” were excluded

One question in the survey asked, “Is your gender different than the gender that you were assigned at birth?” We found that 1.8% of people answered “Yes” which is high compared to other estimates of the proportion of individuals who identify as transgender\(^3\). We also found that there were no statistically significant differences between those who answered “Yes” and those who answered “No” to the above question with the exception of living arrangements where people answering “Yes” were more likely to live alone.

Related Resources

PFund Foundation Resources: [http://pfundfoundation.org/philanthropic-advocacy/resources/](http://pfundfoundation.org/philanthropic-advocacy/resources/)


Contact

For more information, accessible formats of this publication, or assistance with additional equal access to human services, email [mba@state.mn.us](mailto:mba@state.mn.us) or call 651-431-2500 or 1-800-882-6262 (TTY 1-800-627-3529).