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SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG AGING GAY MEN: BABY BOOMERS COMPARED TO MILLENNIALS

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Statement of the Problem: Older gay men aged 52-70 survived the AIDS crisis and a less accepting society resulting in social networks that differ drastically compared to the general population. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived social make-up of gay men across two groups: Baby boomers and millennials using an anonymous survey.

Aim: The study will aim to illustrate current social support for baby boomers and anticipated social support for millennials. Based on varying sociopolitical landscapes experienced by the two cohorts, the study will specifically try to discern if gay millennials will rely more on social support systems similar to their heterosexual counterparts: children and marriage are considered traditional institutions along with an emphasis on biological families compared to gay boomers.

Current Literature: Marginalized sexual identity buffers the negative stressors of aging due to identity resolution earlier on life. Older gay men rely more on communities of “chosen family” and have a greater network of friends compared to straight counterparts. Gay boomers are more likely to be caretakers having survived the AIDS crisis.

Methodology: Gay men across the two cohorts were recruited via snowballing, Craigslist ads, notices in gay sites around the San Francisco Bay Area, and ads in national and gay LISTSERVs. Participants are eligible to win 1 of 3 (\$50) amazon gift cards upon completing a demographic form with information about their ethnicity, and gay identity, coming out experiences along with the multidimensional scale of perceived social support. All data will be collected via surveys and this can be done electronically or hard copy. Responses are anonymous.

Findings: Data is still under collection for analysis and discussion at conference.

Significance: The study will assess not only the current needs of older gay men but future cohorts as they move into later life.

Biography:

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