Disordered Eating Behaviors in Sexual and Gender Minority Adolescents:
A Literature Review

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BACKGROUND

- The literature on eating disorders (ED) in adolescents:
  - Establishes prevalence and presentation
  - Acknowledges social pressures as a risk factor
- Body image ideals differ between sexual orientation minority (lesbian, gay, bisexual) adolescents and heterosexual peers
- Gender expression ideals differ between cisgender and gender minority (transgender, non-conforming) youth
- Limited data on diagnosed EDs in these populations, but robust literature on disordered eating behaviors (DEBs)
- Increased risk of depression and suicide attempts in youth with EDs and DEBs
- How do sexual orientation and gender identity/expression impact DEBs and EDs?
- To our knowledge, ours is the first literature review to address DEBs in sexual orientation minority youth and gender minority youth

METHODS

- Records identified via database searching (duplicates removed)
- Review of abstract (n=47)
- Review of full text article (n=25)
- Exclusion criteria:
  - Age not specified, average age >21, >10% of participant age >21
  - Outcome measures were not DEB
  - Poster abstracts, Case studies, Editorials
- Data extraction (n=16) including:
  - Study design
  - Publication date
  - Data collection method
  - Participant LGBT-ID or other
  - DEB outcome: bingeing, dieting, vomiting laxative use, diet pill use, steroid use, restriction, exercise
  - Prevalence and odds ratios of DEB

OBJECTIVE

To review the prevalence or likelihood of disordered eating behaviors amongst sexual and gender minority adolescents

DISCUSSION

1. What does the data mean?
   Role of Screening:
   - Who and when?
   - What DEB to screen?
   - Include body ideal questions?

2. High prevalence of DEB vs. low prevalence of diagnosed eating disorders
   Screen using issues:
   - Or DEB indicative of other underlying concerns or within range of normal development?

3. Existing data is largely non-clinical
   Need for more data

4. “Unsure” identity:
   - Evolving social pressures
   - Anxiety of uncertainty vs. exclusion of not readily defined ID vs. not-out

RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Studies Included

Table 2. Number of Studies Showing Significant or Non-significant Difference in DEB by LGBT Identity

Table 3. Prevalence of DEB: Highest Reported Across All Identity Groups:

Table 3. Highest prevalence reported from studies included in review for specific DEB.