



Psychological Distress among Incarcerated LGBT+ Australians: *Starting the Conversation*

Katie Hail-Jares, Craig Cumming, Jesse Young, Rohan Borschmann, Stuart Kinner, Nick Lennox



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1.1 LGBT+ People and Psychological Distress

- LGBT+ people make up approximately 3.1% of the Australian population¹
- Report disproportionately high rates of psychological distress²⁻⁶
- This psychological distress can lead to increased rates of self harm and suicidal ideation⁷⁻⁹



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1.1 LGBT+ People and Psychological Distress



- Minority Stress ¹⁰⁻¹³
 - Cumulative experience of stigma and victimization experienced by members of a marginalized social group
 - Becomes more pronounced during the “coming out” period ¹⁴⁻¹⁵
 - Exacerbated by intersecting identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status ¹⁶⁻²⁰

1.2 Incarceration as a compounding factor

- LGBT+ people face increased risks for incarceration²¹⁻²²
 - 3x the incarceration rate among SSA adults and youth (USA)
- Once incarcerated, LGBT+ adults are more likely to report sexual and physical victimization²¹
 - These findings were associated with identity **not** behaviour

2.0 Research Questions

1. Are incarcerated LGBT+ people more likely to self-report a) mental distress; b) self-harm; and c) suicidal behaviours than their non-LGBT+ counterparts?
2. Do administrative records of incarcerated LGBT+ people indicate that they experienced more medically-verified incidents of self-harm?
3. Are incarcerated LGBT+ people more likely to self-report self-harm or suicidal behaviours even when controlling for other factors in the study period?



2.1 Methods

- Health After Release from Prison (HARP) Cohort
 - 2,702 respondents (1,325 Queensland)
 - Surveys at -30 days, 30 days PR, 60 days PR, and 90 days PR
 - Collected information on demographics, physical and mental health, and use of services
- Data linked for QLD cohort to medical records
- Bivariate and multivariate modeling (Stata 13)



3.0 Results: Demographic Information

- 6.3% identified as LGBT+
- More incarcerated women identified as LGBT+ than men (61.5% v. 38.6%; $p < 0.001$)
- Marginally, Aboriginal-Torres Strait Islander people were more likely to identify as LGBT+ (33.7% v. 25.0%; $p < 0.1$)
- Other demographics, including age, education, marital status, sentence length, and number of adult incarcerations, did not significantly differ



3.1 Self-Reports: Mental Distress

- Incarcerated LGBT+ people were significantly more likely to report:
 - Feeling depressed in the past 4 weeks (62.7% v. 47.7%)
 - *Frequently* feeling depressed in the past 4 weeks (20.5% v. 10.0%)
 - Being diagnosed with a mental illness over their lifetime (63.9% v. 42.1%)
 - Receiving an involuntary treatment order over their lifetime (20.8% v. 7.3%)



3.1 Self Reports: Self Harm & Suicide

- With regards to self-harm, LGBT+ people were more likely to report that:
 - In the last 4 weeks, they had thought about harming, injuring or killing themselves (4.8 v. 1.3; $p < 0.05$).
 - They had deliberately harmed or injured themselves (33.7 v. 12.7; $p < 0.001$)
 - In the last 4 weeks, they had exerted control over their eating such as vomiting, skipping meals, or over-exercising (14.5 v. 7.7; $p < 0.05$)

- When asked about suicide or suicidal ideation specifically, LGBT+ people reported that they were:
 - More likely to have attempted suicide (45.8 v. 19.6; $p < 0.001$)
 - Reported more suicide attempts overall (4.1 v. 2.7; $p < 0.05$)



3.2 Medically Verified Episodes of Self-Harm

- Administrative records linked to LGBT+ people were twice as likely to medically verify both episodes of self-harm (25.3% v. 12.0%; $p < 0.000$) and self-harm ideation (30.1% v. 16.7%; $p < 0.002$).



3.3 Factors Associated with History of Suicide Attempt

Factor (n=1318)	AOR	95% CI	SE	p-value
LGBT+	2.02	1.17-3.48	0.56	0.012
Sex	1.20	0.83-1.72	0.22	NS
Indigenous Status	1.12	0.82-1.68	0.21	NS
Education	0.94	0.86-1.03	0.04	NS
Married	0.65	0.47-0.89	0.11	0.008
Lifetime history of depression	2.22	1.62-3.06	0.36	0.000
Lifetime history of self-harm	4.47	3.11-6.42	0.83	0.000
Lifetime history of mental illness diagnosis	3.05	2.20-4.22	0.51	0.000



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3.3 Factors Associated with History of Self-Harm

Factor (n=1318)	AOR	95% CI	SE	p-value
LGBT+	2.49	1.44-4.30	0.69	0.001
Sex	1.10	0.74-1.65	0.23	NS
Aboriginal Status	1.35	0.91-1.99	0.27	NS
Education	0.93	0.84-1.03	0.05	NS
Married	0.91	0.64-1.29	0.16	NS
Lifetime history of depression	1.46	1.03-2.08	0.26	0.035
Lifetime history of mental illness diagnosis	5.30	3.59-7.81	1.05	0.000



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4.0 Discussion

- Sexual and gender identity is associated with higher rates of self-harm and suicide, even when controlling for other factors
- This is true not just for the history of the behavior, but also the intensity (more attempts, more recent, and more often)
- Lays the groundwork for further questions and policy development regarding intersecting identities



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5.0 Bibliography

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Thank you!

Contact Information: Katie Hail-Jares

k.hail-jares@griffith.edu.au

The HARP Cohort Study: Stuart Kinner

s.kinner@unimelb.edu.au

