

Typologies of alcohol and other drug related risk among lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and queer identifying people in Australia

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Introduction / Issues: While prevalence and patterns of alcohol and other drug use among some LGBTQ+ subpopulations are well established, patterns of substance-related risk have been less thoroughly explored. This study aims to determine typologies of alcohol and other drug risk among sexuality and gender diverse individuals in Australia.

Method / Approach: Latent class analyses were performed using data from the Private Lives 3 study (n=6,835) to determine distinct patterns of alcohol and other drug risk, as measured by the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test and Drug Abuse Screening Tool. Demographic characteristics, experience of harassment, assault and/or threats, LGBTQ+ connectedness, and acceptance by family were compared across emergent classes.

Results: Alcohol and other drug risk was characterised as 'no risk' (13.3%), 'low risk' (15.1%), 'moderate risk' (30.1%), or 'moderate alcohol only risk' (41.5%). Participants in the 'moderate risk' class were markedly more likely to report being the victim of past 12-month sexual assault, while participants in the 'moderate alcohol only risk' group were the least likely to report verbal abuse, harassment, and physical threats. Participants in the 'no risk' class were the least likely to feel part of the LGBTQ+ community. Trans or gender-diverse participants were most likely to belong to the 'no risk' or 'low risk' classes.

Discussions and Conclusions: Our findings indicate that alcohol and other drug risk is not uniform among LGBTQ+ individuals in Australia, nor is the distribution of harms experienced by them. Tailored harm-reduction interventions may be fruitful in attenuating harms based on risk profile.

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