

# Arab & Gay: Exploring The Intersectional Identities Of Gay Arab-Australian Men

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## Background:

Gay Arab-Australian men experience distinctive cultural, religious, and sexual identity challenges that can have implications for their health outcomes. However, current research aimed at improving the wellbeing of gay Australian men has largely overlooked the intersectional identities of ethnic minority subgroups within this population. Specifically, there remains a gap in understanding the lived experience of gay Arabs, despite Arabic being the second most commonly spoken non-English language in Australia. We explore the intersectional identities of gay Australian men of Arab descent, shedding light on a neglected subgroup.

## Methods:

This study employed a qualitative approach, conducting one-on-one interviews with gay Arab-Australian men. Participants were recruited through a mix of purposive and snowball sampling. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed.

## Results:

Eleven men participated (aged 25–59), all self-identifying as gay or queer, and more than half residing in an area of Sydney that is characterised by a high concentration of Arab communities. Most participants identified as Christian (n=8), and of Lebanese background (n=9). Six participants had completed a postgraduate education and had full-time employment at the time of the interview (n=6). Analysis revealed four distinctive themes: (1) Navigating the intersectionality of cultural, religious, and gay identities; (2) Surviving within stigmatising contexts; (3) Coming out: a dilemma; and (4) Strategies towards self-acceptance and advocacy.

## Conclusion:

This study emphasises the need for an intersectional approach to understanding the lived experiences of individuals with stigmatised identities, such as some populations of gay Australian men with diverse cultural and religious profiles. Neglecting these complex intersectional identities may have significant public health implications, including limited access to healthcare services, increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and poorer mental health outcomes. Recognising this complexity is crucial for fostering culturally supportive environments for gay men of diverse ethnic backgrounds in Australia and beyond.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None