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| **GayBy Boomers and the new challenges for health promotion with older adults** |
| **Background/Objectives**The older gay male population is rapidly increasing, largely due to the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. Older gay men, i.e., Gayby Boomers, are different from their heterosexual Baby Boomers peers and the larger gay male population. This was the first group of men to adopt and use the “gay” identity, fighting against societal stigma. This cohort was actively involved in the larger sexual liberation movement. Many in this group were able to openly live with their partners or significant others and create large communities. Then, they faced HIV and AIDS and now are the first ones to age with HIV. The arrival of the Gayby Boomers into the aging population is also relevant to health promotion because of the strikingly heterosexual (and asexual) field of aging. The gerontology literature is based on a variety of assumptions about the self, desire, coupling, family, community, and life course emerging, largely, from a heterosexual, white, and middle class world.**Methods**This research draws on ethnographic research (e.g., in-depth interviews and participant observation) with a group of men Gayby Boomers: White, African American, Latino, and HIV-positive and negative in Chicago, USA. I also rely on exiting literature.**Results**I examine the experiences of Gayby Boomers to inform and bring together queer theory and gerontology and outline the challenges for health promotion. Implicit in this analysis is a critique of the predominant gerontology framework. I argue that we need to put these two perspectives in dialogue to revise, and, or, develop conceptual tools that could assist us in describing, analysing, and changing the new realities of old age – and, eventually, advance health equity.As they have been for the last 40 years, older gay men are trapped between expressing who they are and the stigma towards gender nonconformity, age, and HIV/AIDS (and race, for some). Yet, they are creating structures to define life as an older gay person. While the recent visibility of the older gay men is an important step against discrimination, it has reinforced (heterosexual) norms about aging and masculinity that might, unintentionally, create undue stress on gay men. This is partly due to gerontology’s heteronormative notions about old age.**Discussion**Older age is being transformed, “queered,” and the health promotion must follow that change to inform health equity.**Keywords LGBTQ, Gay Men, Aging, Queer, Older Adults** |