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Care Research

The Social Care Needs of Older Ethnic Minority Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer People

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Why review the social care needs of older ethnic minority LGBTQ people?

Older ethnic minority people and older LGBTQ people are less likely to access social care services, and less likely to have their needs addressed, than older people more generally (Bécares et al. 2020; Kapadia, 2022; King et al., 2019)

There is evidence to suggest older ethnic minority LGBTQ people's needs are likely to differ from both other ethnic minority and other LGBTQ people's needs (Booth et al., 2021)

Methodology

Mapping existing research, in conversation with critical insights from the stakeholder groups

What research is currently available in the UK about the social care needs of LGBTQ people from ethnic minority backgrounds who are over 50 years old?

What groups have been involved in research?

What has the focus of research been?

How has research been carried out and by who?

Key findings

Methodology

Inclusive approach to selecting studies:

- Social care need
- Studies including older ethnic minority LGBTQ people, if relevant findings presented
- Methodology - broad definition of research

Stakeholder groups

Ethnic minority LGBTQ people who were over 50 years old

Lived experience and extensive practice and research knowledge

Difficulties reflecting the diversity of the study's focus – the groups comprised four gay men and one lesbian. We did not succeed in recruiting any trans people

Areas of input

- Identifying, selecting and analysing literature

- Considering research questions and methodologies for future research

Findings about the research

37 publications, reporting on 35 studies

None of these studies focused on the needs of older ethnic minority LGBTQ people

Research offers 'nuggets' of data and insight rather than detailed, developing field of knowledge

Shift away from research on specific ethnic, sexual or gender identity groups towards broader groupings (e.g. BAME, LGBT), particularly among larger studies

Findings in the research

Mental health vulnerabilities

Community and social networks

Interactions with social care services

Mental health vulnerabilities

Sexual and gender identities approached by different studies in contrasting ways, as internal features (e.g. Jaspal et al., 2021); as developing through life course experiences (e.g. Bhugra, 1997; Jivraj et al., 2003)

High levels of anxiety, depression and distress (e.g. LGBT Hero, 2020; LGBT Foundation, 2020; Jaspal et al., 2021)

Community and social networks

Religious networks had different kinds of importance for different ethnic and gender groups (Keogh et al, 2004; Jivraj et al., 2003; McCarthy and das Nair, 2017).

Family networks may be important and supportive, while complicating experiences of care and bereavement (Bristowe et al. 2023)

Friendship and social networks are likely to be crucial for people with care needs and those using formal social care services (Carr and Ross, 2013; Willis et al., 2023)

Interactions with health and social care services

In fourteen of the studies, older ethnic minority LGBTQ people reported experiences of discrimination from health or social care services

People often had low expectations of practitioners or were wary of disclosing personal information, because of previous experiences of services

Services were unlikely to consider different strands of identity and routinely assumed people were heterosexual (Chinouya and Aspinall, 2011; Guasp and Kibirige, 2012)

Participants tended to want inclusive services rather than services delivered to particular ethnic minority or LGBTQ communities

Conclusions and recommendations

Older ethnic minority LGBTQ people's social care needs are made more complex by exclusion and discrimination in society and from services

Services tend to reproduce the assumption that users cannot be both ethnic minority and LGBTQ

Most research projects on LGBTQ people reflect the experiences of only some of these groups and recruit very few ethnic minority participants

Researchers need to collaborate directly with ethnic minority LGBTQ organisations and groups

Ethnic minority LGBTQ organisations and groups need funding to build their capacity to engage with research