

Targeting the needs of aging LGBTQ+: Addressing barriers to healthcare access

Susan Wiley

Danielle LaChance

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking-matters-symposium>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Wiley, Susan and LaChance, Danielle, "Targeting the needs of aging LGBTQ+: Addressing barriers to healthcare access" (2022). *Thinking Matters Symposium. 2*.
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking-matters-symposium/2022/poster_presentations/2

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thinking Matters Symposium by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

Targeting the Needs of Aging LGBTQ+: Addressing Barriers to Healthcare Access

Susan Wiley, MSW Candidate, Danielle LaChance, MSW Candidate, Adam Quinn, PhD, MSW, Faculty Member



Research question: *What barriers, if any, do LGBTQ+ elders/aging face when accessing healthcare services?*

Background

- ❖ The U.S. aging population will be **94.7 million in 2060**.¹
- ❖ Approximately **50 million** people will identify as **LGBTQ+ by 2030**.²
- ❖ LGBTQ+ are more likely to live alone and need equitable access to healthcare.³

Objectives

- ❖ Understand LGBTQ+ experiences, barriers and perceptions of accessing residential care in Maine.
- ❖ Learn how the disparities in healthcare systems affect LGBTQ+ that are seeking and receiving services aimed at improving quality of life.

Methods

- ❖ Partnering agencies distributed the survey link and shared on social media.
- ❖ Respondents were LGBTQ+, 18 years of age or older, residential care employees, friends and loved ones of LGBTQ+.

Footnotes

- ¹Cummings, C. R., et al. As we age: Listening to the voice of LGBTQ older adults. *Social Work in Public Health*, 4, (2021):509–525
- ²Czaja, S., et al. Concerns about aging and caregiving among middle-aged and older lesbian and gay adults. *Aging & Mental Health*, 20, (2015): 1107–1118.
- ³Putney, J., et al. "Fear runs deep:" the anticipated needs of LGBT older adults in Long-Term care. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 8, (2016): 887–907.

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, please rate the statements below on their level of importance when planning for the aging process:

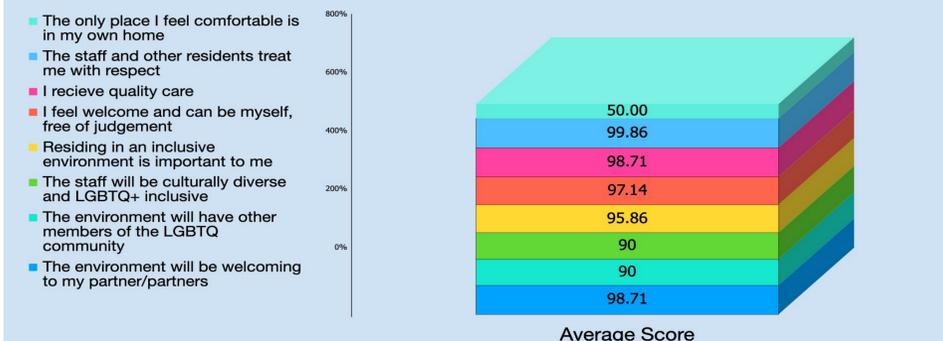


Figure 1. Factors of Importance

Do LGBTQ+ older adults that are open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in a residential care facility experience the following:

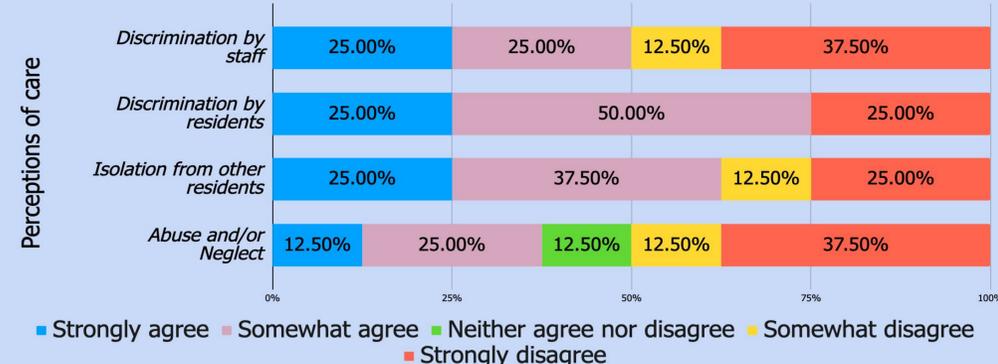


Figure 2. Perceptions of care

If you or a loved one identify as LGBTQ+ please indicate if you or a loved one have experienced the following when accessing care in a residential facility:

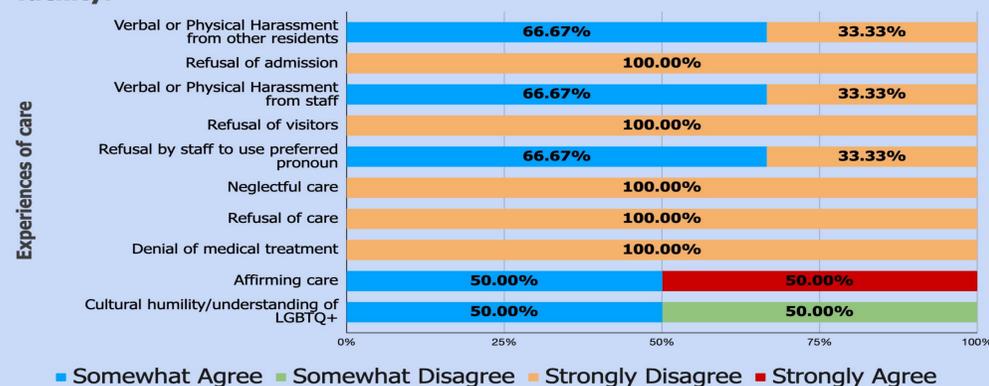


Figure 3. Experiences accessing care

Findings

- ❖ **Respect, quality care** and **welcoming environment** are the top-rated considerations for the aging process. (Figure 1)
- ❖ **75%** of respondents perceive a **risk of discrimination** if open about sexual orientation/gender identity. (Figure 2)
- ❖ **66.67%** of LGBTQ+ have experienced **verbal or physical harassment** by residents and staff. (Figure 3)

Discussion

- ❖ Addressing the barriers, perceptions and experiences of aging LGBTQ+ in Maine **is essential** to provide quality care.
- ❖ This information **is vital** to nursing care facilities in Maine, as there has been no prior research conducted.
- ❖ Affirming care **requires** a cultural understanding of LGBTQ+ needs.

Limitations

- ❖ **100%** of respondents identified as white.
- ❖ Small sample size of **N=15**
- ❖ COVID-19 staff shortages impacted sample size.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our community partners, and participants, without you this study would not have been possible.