

Intimate Partner Violence in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Population: Data from the California Health Interview Survey

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Few studies have examined history of intimate partner violence (IPV) among sexual minorities. We assessed prevalence and predictors of IPV using a probability sample of California residents ages 18 - 70. Lifetime and 1-year IPV prevalence was higher in sexual minorities compared with heterosexuals but this was significant only for bisexual women and gay men (see table). IPV of bisexual women, but not gay men, occurred in a heterosexual relationship. We tested whether the higher prevalence of IPV in gay men and bisexual women was explained by two mental health indicators—psychological distress and binge drinking—but this hypothesis was not supported. Our finding that gay men’s IPV occurred in same-sex relationships but bisexual women’s IPV occurred in different-sex relationships suggest that different explanations—and different interventions—should be sought for sexual orientation disparity in IPV in sexual minority men versus women.

Lifetime and 1-Year History of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among California Health Interview Survey 2007 - 2008 Respondents by Sexual Orientation

	Women			Men		
	Unadjusted Prevalence % (SE)	Effect of Sexual Orientation AOR (95% CI)		Unadjusted Prevalence % (SE)	Effect of Sexual Orientation AOR (95% CI)	
Lifetime IPV						
Heterosexual	21.60% 0.01	1.0 (REF)		11.38% 0.00	1.0 (REF)	
Lesbian or Gay	31.87% 0.05	1.23 0.79	1.94	26.94% 0.04	2.68 1.75	4.11
Bisexual	51.99% 0.05	3.24 2.20	4.77	19.57% 0.05	1.16 0.46	2.95
WSW or MSM**	32.11% 0.09	1.17 0.63	2.19	16.51% 0.07	1.65 0.68	4.00
1-Year IPV						
Heterosexual	5.00% 0.00	1.0 (REF)		4.64% 0.00	1.0 (REF)	
Lesbian or Gay	10.23% 0.03	1.13 0.49	2.59	12.08% 0.03	2.41 1.32	4.40
Bisexual	27.48% 0.06	4.07 1.96	8.45	9.06% 0.03	1.06 0.38	2.99
WSW or MSM**	21.59% 0.10	1.67 0.72	3.86	8.64% 0.06	1.86 0.25	13.94

* Data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) 2007 sample.

** WSW = women who have sex with women; MSM = men who have sex with men.

Adjusted Odds Ratios (AOR) are adjusted for race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age, experiences of binge drinking, employment status, and psychological distress (ever and in the past year for intimate partner violence since age 18 and in the past year, respectively).