

At the crossroads: Tobacco use, adverse childhood experiences and other risk factors among lesbian, gay and bisexual youth

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BACKGROUND

Examines the association between tobacco use, sexual orientation, adverse childhood experiences and other risk factors among adolescents to inform tobacco prevention programming for LGBTQ youth.

METHODS

- Data from 2017 National Youth Risk Behavior (YRBS) survey of high school students (n = 11,000)
- Logistic regression models compared student behaviors, experiences and risk factors by 1) sexual orientation and 2) current tobacco use among lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) students (n = 1,447)
- Controlled for gender, age and race of student

RESULTS

High school students who currently used tobacco and identified as LGB were:

- Nearly 5 times more likely to have attempted suicide [OR = 4.5] or forced to have sexual intercourse [OR = 4.5] and 3 times more likely to have been bullied at school [OR = 3.2] than non-LGB youth who used tobacco. [Model 1]
- Over 20 times more likely to have ever used illegal drugs [OR = 20.5], 13 times more likely to have driven under the influence of alcohol or marijuana [OR = 13.1] and 16 times more likely to have had a weapon at school than LGB students who did not use tobacco. [Model 2]

DISCUSSION

Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth who use tobacco also have significantly higher levels of adverse childhood experiences and other risk factors that can lead to long-term health risks. More comprehensive school-based tobacco programs focused on the needs of this population are needed, including comprehensive counseling and support to help with co-occurring issues that include substance abuse, sexual assault, violence, bullying and mental health.

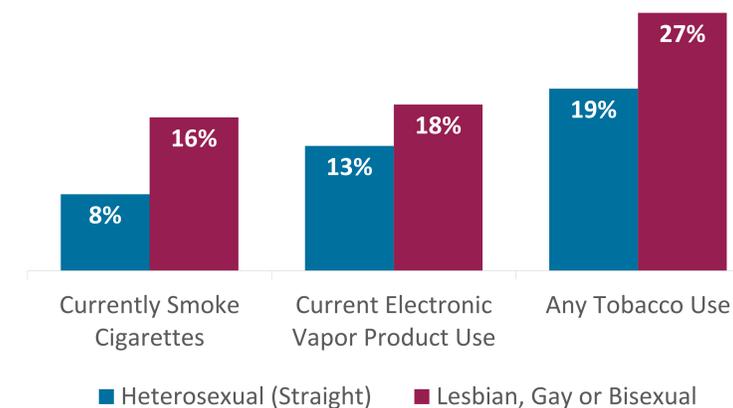
Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth who use tobacco are significantly more likely to have attempted suicide, experienced sexual violence, use illegal drugs and feel threatened at school.

Compared to LGB youth who don't use tobacco and non-LGB youth who currently use tobacco



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TOBACCO USE BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION



LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

	Odds Ratios for LGB Tobacco Users	
	Model 1 Sexual Orientation ¹	Model 2 Tobacco Use (LGB Students) ¹
Drug and Alcohol Use		
Ever used illegal drugs	2.3	20.5
Drove under influence of alcohol or marijuana	N.S.	13.1
Currently use marijuana	2.5	9.9
Currently drink alcohol	N.S.	9.5
Use prescription pain medicine without a prescription	2.1	6.4
Depression and Suicide		
Attempted suicide	4.5	2.2
Made a plan to attempt suicide	5.6	2.0
Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions	5.5	2.6
Felt sad or hopeless	3.2	1.3*
Sexual Violence		
Physically forced to have sexual intercourse	4.5	3.0
Experienced sexual violence	4.2	3.5
Bullying		
Were electronically bullied	3.2	2.5
Were bullied on school property	2.9	1.5
School Violence		
Carried a weapon on school property	1.7	16.0
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	1.6	3.3
Health and Wellness		
Were physically active at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days	0.3	N.S.
Played on at least one sports team	0.4	N.S.

N.S. = not significant (p > .05); * significant at p < .10; all other factors significant at p < .001.

¹ Reference categories: Model 1: Heterosexual students who currently use tobacco; Model 2: LGB students who currently do not use tobacco.