

Garden State Equality Tackles Tobacco Use

An Ethnographic Assessment with the LGBTQ+ Community

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Introduction

- **The Office of Tobacco Control and Prevention (OTCP) is housed within the New Jersey Department of Health.**
 - OTCP implements statewide evidence-based tobacco prevention, cessation, and policy initiatives.
 - OTCP is currently working to reduce tobacco-related disparities within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community.
 - To learn more about OTCP, visit <https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/tobacco/>
- **Garden State Equality (GSE) is a LGBTQ+ advocacy and education non-profit agency in New Jersey.**
 - GSE is an exemplified leader in committing to change, advocacy, and securing the well-being of all LGBTQ+ residents in the state of New Jersey.
 - To learn more about GSE, visit <https://www.gardenstateequality.org/>



Background

- **Tobacco use is higher among LGBTQ+ populations than among the heterosexual populations.**
 - 16.1% of LGB adults smoke cigarettes compared to the 12.3% of heterosexual/straight adults
 - 21.3% of transgender adults currently use e-cigarettes compared to 5% of cisgender adults
 - 17.4% of LGB high school students report using tobacco products compared to 11.4% of heterosexual students
- **Higher rates of tobacco use is seen due to the rigorous marketing from Big Tobacco Companies.**
- **Quitting Behavior in this Community:**
 - LGB individuals are 5 times more likely than others to never intend to call a smoking cessation Quitline



Why An Ethnographic Assessment?

- **Allows for the observation of people in their natural environments in order to gain a more holistic, contextual understanding of a group's shared culture, beliefs, and social dynamics**
- **Useful approach for learning first-hand about the behaviors and interactions of people within a particular context**



An Ethnographic Assessment within the LGBTQ+ Community: Purpose

- **The objective of this ethnographic assessment was to understand the psychological, social, and physical factors that contribute to tobacco use in the LGBTQ+ community in Monmouth, Essex, and Camden Counties.**
- **The aim of this ethnographic assessment is to answer the following questions:**
 - How do psychosocial elements contribute to tobacco use?
 - What are the barriers to tobacco cessation for LGBTQ+ community members?

Methods

- **The ethnographic assessment consisted of:**
 - Literature Review
 - Media Analysis of current tobacco media campaigns within the LGBTQ Community
 - Online Questionnaire
 - One-to-one Interviews

- **Criteria for participation:**
 - Resides or works within the selected counties and is either a current or former smoker
 - Identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community
 - Be at least 18 years or older

Methods

- **A literature review was conducted to identify and analyze the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.**
- **A media analysis to review news articles, and media campaigns around the LGBTQ+ community and tobacco cessation.**
- **Thirty-two anonymous, online questionnaires were completed, and nine one-on-one interviews were conducted.**
 - The open- and closed-ended questionnaire was designed to gather data on demographics, tobacco use, cessation attempts, effects of tobacco media influences, and awareness of New Jersey's tobacco cessation services.
 - The questionnaire, housed on Garden State Equality's (GSE) website, was disseminated via email to the GSE listserv and social media outlets.

Methods

- **Nine (9) one-on-one phone or in-person interviews, averaging 20 minutes, were conducted by trained interviewers.**
- **Interviews were designed to gather information on contributing psychosocial factors and stressors that lead to tobacco use within this community.**
- **Interviews were recorded and coded.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Demographics

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT
White	75%
Black/African Americans	6.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.3%
Multiracial	3.1%
Hispanic	9.4%

Demographics

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	PERCENT
Gay	40.6%
Lesbian	12.5%
Bisexual	9.4%
Asexual	3.1%
Transgender	12.5%
Queer	12.5%
Non-Binary	3.1%
Prefer not to say	6.3%

Results

- **94% of the participants utilized some form of tobacco (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, cigarillos, chew).**
 - A majority of respondents reported dual-usage (cigarettes & e-cigarettes; cigarettes & smokeless tobacco).
- **Most participants began using tobacco products between the ages of 11-20 years old.**
- **Most participants identified family/friends as major contributors to tobacco use.**
- **Participants rated the persuasiveness of anti-smoking media campaigns on their use of tobacco products or vaping on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not at all, 2=not much, 3=somewhat, 4=very, 5=extremely).**
 - 40.6% stated not at all
 - 15.6% stated not much
 - 28.1% stated somewhat
 - 12.5% stated very
 - 3.1% stated extremely

Results

- **Only 31.2% were aware of their local Quit Center**
- **Only 40.6% were aware of the statewide New Jersey Quitline**
- **Quitting Behavior: Participants utilized assisted and/or unassisted tobacco cessation methods.**
 - Assisted: nicotine replacement therapy and individual therapy (15%)
 - Unassisted: cold turkey, vape-to-quit, reading tobacco-related literature, working out, and detachment from unhealthy environments (50%)
 - Both assisted or unassisted: 15%

Results

- **Barriers to smoking cessation were identified and included the following factors:**
 - Psychological: depression, anxiety, low self-efficacy
 - Social: friends, family, partners, and going to bars
 - Physical: nicotine dependency and withdrawal symptoms

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Interviews: Key Results

- **Out of the nine (9) participants:**
 - 5 identified as Gay
 - 1 identified as Lesbian
 - 1 identified as Bisexual
 - 2 identified as Transgender
- **7 out of 9 currently use tobacco products**
- **Major contributors to tobacco product use**
 - Friends & family
 - A sense of belonging within the LGBTQ+ community
- **Quitting behavior**
 - Most of the participants have thought about quitting and have utilized the unassisted methods to reduce their consumption (mainly through physical activity, meditation, books, or cold-turkey quitting)
 - 5 out of 9 participants were aware of their local quit center

Conclusions/Future Direction

- **This assessment was the first step in understanding the factors influencing smoking cessation among the LGBTQ+ community.**
- **This assessment aided in statewide efforts to understand the factors influencing smoking cessation among the LGBTQ+ population in New Jersey counties with the highest smoking prevalence rates.**
- **The findings will help inform future research and the design of effective smoking campaigns, referral services, and cessation programs tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals.**
- **In collaboration, OTCP and GSE are working to gather more information to build effective smoking cessation programs tailored to the LGBTQ+ community. The work will involve:**
 - Focus Groups with LGBTQ+ individuals to assess factors that influence tobacco use
 - Key Informant Interviews in healthcare/hospital settings to assess gender-affirming care

Thank you!!

