



## Background and Objectives

Same-sex attraction is a common feature of human sexuality (beyondblue, 2011), documented across history and cultures (Foucault, 1978). While there is nothing inherently suicidogenic about sexual minority identity or status, a degree of continued stigma at family and societal levels in relation to minority sexualities (Blosnich & Bossarie, 2012) and genders (Fitzpatrick, Euton, Jones, & Schmidt, 2005) has led researchers to believe, for some time, that there is a relationship between suicidal behaviour and sexual minorities, especially in adolescence (Shaffer, Fisher, Parides, & Gould, 1995). Early research (from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s) on the risk of suicide among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals, however, showed inconsistent results (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2005; McDaniel, Purcell, & D'Augelli, 2011).

The aim of this report is to review the international and Australian literature about suicidality in minority sexual identity and/or behaviour groups. Minority sexual identity refers to those who identify or are identified by others (in the case of psychological autopsies) as having a minority sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals).

## Methodology

Two separate literature searches were conducted using the databases Scopus, Medline, and Proquest for articles published in English in peer-reviewed academic journals. The studies reviewed examine suicidal behaviour among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual individuals (LGBT; or a subset of these). Results related to transsexual/minority gender individuals are not reported here.

The first literature search focussed on recent international literature (published since 2000). In order to keep the number of search results within manageable limits, the search was restricted to articles with the terms suicid\* AND gay OR lesbian OR bisexual OR transsexual in the title.

The second literature search focussed on all Australian studies. The search was restricted to articles with the terms suicid\* AND Australia AND gay OR lesbian OR bisexual OR transsexual in the title, key words, or abstract.

Where reference was made to other important studies in the articles from the search, these additional articles were also reviewed in order to be considered for inclusion in this overview. All empirical research about suicidal behaviours among gender minorities was included.

## Results

The studies identified found LGB individuals to be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation (Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006; Marshal et al., 2012; Silenzio, Peña, Duberstein, Cerel, & Knox, 2007), suicide attempt (Bolton & Sareen, 2011; Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Russell & Joyner, 2001; Silenzio, et al., 2007), and completed suicide (men only; Mathy, Cochran, Olsen, & Mays, 2011). A meta-analysis conducted by King and colleagues (2008) on 25 studies from seven countries revealed that non-heterosexual people are at least at twice the lifetime risk of suicide attempt than heterosexual individuals; the lifetime relative risk for gay and bisexual men

*[Faint, illegible text from a reverse-side bleed-through or watermark, likely containing a list of references or search terms.]*

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