Barriers and Facilitators to Cancer Screening Among LGBTQ Individuals With Cancer

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According to 2017 Gallup poll results, 11 million Americans, or 4.5% of the U.S. population, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ); this is an increase from 3.5% in 2012, when Gallup began tracking LGBTQ populations-based data (Newport, 2018). Despite this increase, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Program of Cancer Registries, the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program, and the American College of Surgeons and the American Cancer Society’s National Cancer Data Base do not collect sexual orientation or gender identification (SOGI) data in regard to cancer surveillance. Therefore, limited cancer screening data exist for LGBTQ populations.

Research has shown that LGBTQ populations have the highest rates of tobacco and alcohol use, both of which are known contributors to elevated cancer risk, compared to non-LGBTQ individuals (Daniel & Butkus, 2015). These elevated risks lead to a disproportionate number of LGBTQ individuals living with cancers, including anal, breast, cervical, colorectal, endometrial, lung, and prostate (Bristowe et al., 2018; Burkhalter et al., 2016; Gonzales & Zinone, 2018; Gruskin, Hart, Gordon, & Ackerson, 2001; Institute of Medicine, 2011; McCabe, West, Hughes, & Boyd, 2013; McComiskey et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2004). However, reasons for participation in cancer screening are not largely documented and can only be speculative without collection of cancer-specific SOGI data (Burkhalter et al., 2016; Quinn et al., 2015). Therefore, a literature review was conducted to provide a better understanding of the barriers and facilitators to LGBTQ populations’ cancer screening behavior.

The integrative review framework by Whittemore and Knaf (2005) guided this review and was implemented using the following steps: problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation. Current literature was...