

10.M. Oral session: Minority health

Sexual and gender minorities among students in Italy: population estimate and risk behaviours

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Background:

Sexual and gender minorities (SGM) are at higher risk for stigma, discrimination and, ultimately, development of risky health behaviours than heterosexual counterparts. Latest demographic data on SGM population in Italy date back to 2011 census. The prevalence of risk behaviours among SGM university students has not been previously estimated in Italy. We aimed at estimating the population of SGM university students and assessing the prevalence of risk behaviours.

Methods:

We conducted a cross-sectional survey involving a sample of 18-25 years old students. Participants were asked to complete an anonymous, self-administrated questionnaire on sexual identity/orientation, smoking, use of condom and sexual partners in the last 24 months. χ^2 tests were performed.

Results:

We collected 9,988 questionnaires (response rate 91.3%); 1.41% did not disclose sexual orientation. Transgender individuals were 0.12%. Among cisgender males, 95.39% identified as hetero-, 2.52% as homo- and 2.02% as bisexual; 94.50% of females as hetero-, 1.28% as homo- and 4.21% as bisexual. While among men the proportion of smokers was 30.7% without significant differences among subgroups ($p=.219$), this proportion was 26.1%, 40.5% and 51.6% among hetero-, homo- and bisexual women ($p<.001$); 62.4% of all males declared to use the condom without significant differences ($p=.089$), but 19.0% of homo- and 43.4% of bi-females did compared with 55.5% of heterosexual ($p<.001$); 18.7% of hetero-, 49.4% of homo- and 32.4% of bisexual men declared to have had three or more partners ($p<.001$); among hetero- women the proportion was 11.1%, while 12.5% and 26.3% among homo- and bisexuals.

Conclusions:

SGMs were 5.26% of university students. Compared with hetero- counterparts, homo- and bisexual women showed a higher prevalence of all risk behaviours investigated. In contrast, homo- and bisexual men showed a similar behaviours compared with heterosexual men, except for a significantly higher number of partners.

Key messages:

- Sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) account for 5.26% of the investigated university student population; 4.54% of cisgender men and 5.49% of cisgender women are homo- or bisexual; trans are 0.12%.

- SGMs show unhealthier behaviours compared with heterosexual counterparts; in particular, bisexual women show higher prevalence of smoking and non-use of the condom.