Background

Scholarly and media attention to same-sex relationships has skyrocketed in recent years. The 2011 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report calls for more research on same-sex relationships. Prior research on the health and well-being of sexual minorities emphasizes place.

Prior Research

Few studies have compared the stability of same-sex and different-sex unions (Table 1). The most recent analysis of same-sex relationship data included 1,293 divorces at or prior to the last year of available data. We combined data from a series of telephone surveys in the years 1993-2001, using weights and trunctions to generate comparable models. Census variables were used to create indicators for state-level LGB policies. A multivariate time model analysis revealed that respondent’s state has a statute that protects sexual minorities from discrimination in labor, housing, and public accommodations.

Current Investigation

To examine the influence of contextual factors on the stability of same-sex couples

Data and Samples

National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health).

Methods: Add Health respondents who reported a sexual/romantic relationship at Wave 3 (2001-2002) or who have Wave 4 (2007-2009) and who have Wave 3 (2001-2002) contextual data. Sensitivity tests include comparisons to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), restriction of analyses to Add Health respondents who were consistent in reports of partnering and identity, and left-truncated models.

Key Measures

Sex composition of most recent union: Different-sex couple
Same-sex female couple
Same-sex male couple

Neighborhood-level variable (Wave 3):
Same-sex couple concentration in respondent’s census tract

State-level variable (Wave 3):
Whether respondent’s state has a statute that protects sexual minorities

Analyses

Weighted life table estimates
Survey-adjusted Cox models for comparisons across different data sources and samples

Conclusions

Same-sex male couples have the highest rates of dissolution and different-sex couples exhibit the lowest rates. Same-sex female couples have only slightly higher rates of dissolution than different-sex couples. Same-sex male couples are more stable in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of same-sex couples and in states with statutes that protect sexual minorities.

Limitations

The measures of social context are based on the 2000 Census data.

The indicator of same-sex couple concentration has some error (Dillbnardo and Gates 2012) and is not sex-specific.

References


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References


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