

LGBTQ+ people experience higher unemployment as a result of COVID-19, impacting health

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COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted employment for minority populations resulting in higher unemployment rates and healthcare concerns, according to a Rutgers study.

The study, published in *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, examined United States unemployment rates during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify the specific effects of job loss trends on LGBTQ+ populations.

"LGBTQ+ employment loss critically impacts the overall health and wellbeing of these individuals who commonly experience marginalization and discrimination," says Perry N. Halkitis, dean of the Rutgers School of Public Health and director of the Center for Health, Identity, Behavior & Prevention Studies. "The intersection between [financial stability](#), standard of living, and health is an integral balance. Job loss brings about additional mental and physical burdens, that can further lead to a [public health crisis](#) because these individuals do not have the housing, financial, or health stability required for proper care."

Researchers used an internet-based survey to collect a total sample of 1090 LGBTQ+ study participants from May 2020 through July 2020. Participants self-reported all demographic and employment data, which was later compared to national averages to identify significant differences.

They found that LGBTQ+ individuals in the United States experienced higher rates of job loss, specifically for individuals that were younger in age, black non-Hispanic and white non-Hispanic, gay cisgender men, individuals with lower education levels, HIV-positive, and living with over two other individuals.

The findings suggest high job loss rates can be a result of job type—with those whose work was considered essential as well as individuals with either frontline jobs or professional positions that require more education less likely to face unemployment.

"The conclusions from the survey present data that all health care workers and policy makers should take into consideration when

advocating for [minority populations](#)," Halkitis says. "When individuals face financial hardship, they become vulnerable to eviction and do not seek proper health care, which leads to breaks in necessary care."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted everyone to some extent, with unemployment dramatically increasing throughout the workforce, the data collected indicates the LGBTQ+ community and other minority populations have been affected the most.

This study also underscores the importance of implementing inclusive data collection methods, as one of the first COVID-19 studies that collects [sexual orientation](#) and gender identity demographic information

"Through the integral inclusion of sexual orientation and [gender identity](#) information, we are able to better understand unemployment trends within the LGBTQ+ population," says Kristen D. Krause, instructor at the Rutgers School of Public Health and deputy director of the Center for Health, Identity, Behavior & Prevention Studies. "We were able to deduce that gay men had higher job loss rates compared to cisgender women who identify as bisexual or another orientation. These conclusions highlight the pertinence of including these demographic questions in all national surveys—so valid and inclusive data can be utilized to impact future [health](#) care decisions."

More information: Richard J. Martino et al, Employment Loss as a Result of COVID-19: a Nationwide Survey at the Onset of COVID-19 in US LGBTQ+ Populations, *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s13178-021-00665-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-021-00665-9)

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