BUILDING A RESEARCH CAREER

Focused on Alcohol Use in a Stigmatized and Marginalized Population Group

Tonda L. Hughes, PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor & Associate Dean for Global Health

STTI, 26th Annual International Research Congress
July 26-27, 2015
United Nations Address, 2011

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MudnsExyV78
Objectives

- Provide an overview of my research career development including how and why I chose to focus on the health of sexual minority women (SMW: lesbian, bisexual, mostly heterosexual);

- Highlight some of the most interesting findings from my research with SMW;

- Describe some of the barriers that I encountered in doing work focused on SMW’s drinking; and

- Describe future directions for research related to SMW’s drinking and health.
Predominant Focus on Men in Research

...and Male
In 1990 the GAO criticized NIH for “...excluding women from most studies involving diseases, treatments, and drug effects and for devoting only 13% of its research funds to women” (Fletcher, 1996)
Research on Sexual Minority Health

1980-2000

Boehmer (2002). AJPH
628 studies related to LGBT health

• Only 0.1% focused on aspects of LGBT health other than HIV/AIDS

• Of these:
  • 13.5% included lesbian/bisexual women

Coulter et al. (2014) AJPH
Early Studies of Sexual Minorities’ Drinking

Maud’s—Lesbian Bar in San Francisco (Circa 1966)
Academic Mentors
Early Beginnings: Eastern Kentucky
Early Beginnings: Eastern Kentucky

Married Young
Early Beginnings: Eastern Kentucky

...but not as young as my third cousin!
Master’s Degree: University of Kentucky
Doctoral Education: University of Illinois

Beverly McElmurry, EdD, RN, FAAN

Alice J. Dan, PhD

Denny Webster, PhD, RN, CS

Chicago School of Thought in Women’s Health
Chief Nurse Executives’ Responses To Chemically Dependent Nurses (1989)
NURSING SCAN: WOMEN’S HEALTH

Published by the Graduate Nursing Concentration in Women’s Health Program, an Advanced Nurse Training Grant Supported by DHHS, PHS, Division of Nursing (1D23 NU 004 55–01).

University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Nursing
Patterns of AOD Use among Women (1992-94)

Individual NRSA, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), T32 DA 05466

Patterns of alcohol and drug use among women: focus on special populations.
Hughes TL, Fox ML

Abstract
Despite the growing national concern about the effect of the use of alcohol and other drugs on the health and productivity of men and women, relatively little is known about alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems in women. Because of this lack of research and the stigma associated with women who are alcoholic or drug addicted, AOD problems among women are less likely to be recognized and addressed. This article reviews patterns and consequences of AOD use among a number of special populations of women. Information about risk factors and assessment and screening are included to assist the nurse in the identification, counseling, and referral of women with AOD-related problems.

PMID: 8242041 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]
Sharon Wilsnack: Research Mentor

Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor
Department of Clinical Neuroscience
University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences
Health Equity and Social Justice
Countries where Homosexuality is Illegal
• **In 29 states**, it is legal to fire someone for being “out” as gay, lesbian or bisexual in the workplace.

• **In 34 states**, employers have the legal right to fire people who are transgender.
Hate Crimes in the U.S.

19% of Hate Crimes Target Sexual Minorities
Victims of “Corrective Rape”
Building a Research Career: Early Work

• **Chicago Women’s Health Study** (1992-1994) In collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health & Lesbian Community Cancer Project

• **Multi-site Women’s Health Study** (1994-1996). Chicago, NYC, St. Paul/Minneapolis, Columbus
National Study of Health & Life Experiences of Women

- 20-year longitudinal study of women’s drinking
- National probability sample of adult women

Funded by NIAAA, 5RO1AA 004610
S.Wilsnack, PI
Building a Research Career

Stigmatized and Marginalized Population Groups

The Chicago Health and Life Experiences of Women Study (CHLEW)

Funded by NIH (NIAAA & ORWH)
K01 AA00266, 1999-2002
Institute of Medicine (IOM)
Report on Lesbian Health 1999
Methodological Limitations (IOM Report)

• Lack of appropriate heterosexual comparison groups

• Small or homogenous samples
  ➢ White
  ➢ Well-educated
  ➢ Young

• Lack of longitudinal studies
Baseline CHLEW

Sample Characteristics (N=447)

- 18-83 years (average = 39 yrs)
- 25% household income <$20,000
- 52% SMW of color
- 56% bachelor’s degree or higher
- 68% in committed relationship
- 31% at least one child
INTRODUCTION:

Hello, I'm (NAME) from the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center (SHOW ID CARD). You may remember that a few years ago one of our representatives interviewed you. Now we're contacting exactly the same people and asking them to participate in a follow-up survey. (SHOW LETTER) We recently sent you this letter to explain the reasons for the survey.

The interview takes about an hour, but the time can be shorter depending on how many questions apply to you. We will be asking you about your work and family experiences; about stresses and satisfactions in your life; your health; your use of alcohol and other substances; and aspects of your important personal relationships.

Main Questionnaire

National Study of Health and Life Experiences of Women and Their Partners

University of Chicago

National Opinion Research Center

STICK ASSIGNMENT LABEL OR COPY CASE ID FOR THIS CASE HERE
Heavy Drinking by Race/Ethnic Group

Two or More Drinks per Day on Average

**P < .001  Hughes et al., 2006
12-Month Drinkers by Age Group

Comparison of SMW & Heterosexual Women

<31 yrs  | 31-40 yrs  | 41-50 yrs  | 51+ yrs

CHLEW   | NSHLEW
• Sexual Identity and Drinking: A Longitudinal Follow-Up
  (2003-2008; R01 AA13328)

• Cumulative Stress and Hazardous Drinking in a Community Sample of Adult Sexual Minority Women
  (2009-2014; 2R01 AA13328-9)
Other Collaborative Research

Probability Samples

• Health risks across sexual identity groups in a national sample of young Australian women (ALSWH) T. Hughes, PI; Lesbian Health Fund

• Sexual orientation, mental health and substance use: Secondary analyses of the NESARC data S. McCabe, PI, UMICH; NIMH & NIDA, R21 DA023055

• Sexual Orientation and Correlates of Alcohol Problems (National Alcohol Survey) L. Drabble, PI, Alcohol Research Group, Berkeley, CA; NIAAA R21 AA017947
Other Collaborative Research

Non-probability Samples

- **Women’s Health Update Project (WHUP). National internet-based study of young SMW**
  Kaysen, PI; University of Washington, NIH/NIAAA R01 AA018292

- **Relationships between alcohol use, depression and anxiety in SMW women**
  McNair, PI; University of Melbourne, Australia. BeyondBlue

- **Sexual orientation differences in prevalence & correlates of substance use**
  Drabble & Trocki PIs; NIH/NIDA R01 DA036606
20+ Years of Research

Important and Interesting Findings

Everett et al., in review

Hughes et al., in review; 2010; McNair et al., 2011; Wilsnack et al., 2008

Bostwick et al., 2010; Drabble et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2010a, 2010b; Kaysen et al., 2012; Wilsnack et al., 2008

Alvy et al., 2013; Wilsnack et al., 2012; Drabble et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2010; McCabe et al., 2009; Wilsnack et al., 2008

Bostwick et al., 2010
Past Year Hazardous Drinking

- CHLEW/NSHLEW
  - Heterosexual
  - Bisexual
  - Lesbian

- NESARC
  - Bisexual
  - Lesbian

- ALSWH
  - Bisexual
  - Lesbian
Past Year Depression

- CHLEW/NSHLEW
  - Heterosexual: 30%
  - Bisexual: 80%
  - Lesbian: 60%

- NESARC
  - Heterosexual: 20%
  - Bisexual: 40%
  - Lesbian: 10%

- ALSWH
  - Heterosexual: 10%
  - Bisexual: 30%
  - Lesbian: 20%
Research Findings

- SMW’s rates of lifetime victimization are **2-3 times higher** than those of heterosexual women

- CSA and CPA appear to be **much more severe** among sexual minority than among heterosexual women

References:
- Drabble et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2010a, 2010b; 2014; Kaysen et al., 2012; Wilsnack et al., 2008
- Alvy et al., 2013; Wilsnack et al., 2012.
Research Findings

- Risk behaviors and negative health outcomes vary substantially across sexual minority subgroups; **bisexual women** tend to show the highest risks & poorest health outcomes.

- Women who **identify as lesbian and report only female partners** look very similar to heterosexual women in terms of health risks and outcomes.

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Bostwick et al., 2010; Drabble et al., 2013; Alvy et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2010; McCabe et al., 2009; Wilsnack et al., 2008

Bostwick et al., 2010
**Sexual Identity Response Options**

- Exclusively lesbian/gay
- Mostly/mainly lesbian/gay
- Bisexual
- Mostly/mainly heterosexual
- Exclusively heterosexual

Hughes et al., 2010; McCabe et al., 2011; McNair et al., 2011; Wilsnack et al., 2008
Women who identify as “mostly” heterosexual differ in interesting ways from women who identify as exclusively heterosexual.
## Research Findings (NSLHEW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance Use</th>
<th>Only Heterosexual</th>
<th>Mostly Heterosexual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marijuana (ever)</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>46%***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marijuana (12 months)</strong></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cocaine (ever)</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cocaine (12 mos)</strong></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy drinking (12 mos)</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intoxication (12 mos)</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>57%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binge drinking (12 mo)</strong></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adverse drinking consequences (12 mos)</strong></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alcohol dependence symptoms (12 mos)</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever concerned about having a drinking problem?</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Since last interview, concerned about having a drinking problem?</strong></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever treated for a drinking problem?</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Hughes et al., 2014
Higher femininity scores associated with lower levels of discrimination but higher levels of internalized stigma and depression.

In Contrast

Women who rate themselves as more masculine report lower levels of internalized stigma and depression, but higher levels of discrimination, victimization and hazardous drinking.

Everett et al., in progress
20% report high rates of unintended pregnancy;

Highest risk: SMW who are bisexual, black or have high school education;

50% identify as mostly or exclusively lesbian.
CHLEW Research Findings

• Unintended pregnancy positively associated with depression and hazardous drinking.

• 43% of SMW who reported unintended pregnancy also reported CSA (30% reported CPA)

• CSA and CPA mediated the relationship between unintended pregnancy and depression (but not unintended pregnancy and hazardous drinking).
Major Dimensions of Sexual Orientation

Identity

Attraction

Behavior
Research Findings

- Women whose sexual identity matches their sexual behavior and attraction (e.g., lesbian identity, female sexual partner[s]) are at lower risk than those whose identity does not match the other two major sexual orientation dimensions.

- Women whose sexual identity remains stable have lower risk profiles than do those whose identity changes over time, regardless of the direction of the change.

Everett et al., in review

Talley et al. (2015)
There is still much more to learn about the underlying causes of sexual-orientation related health disparities.
Women interviewed after bill enacted show better outcomes, including lower levels of perceived stigma and discrimination, depressive symptoms and hazardous drinking.

These benefits most apparent for Black and Latina women and women without college level education.
Here come the Brides!

After 72 years together, Vivian Boyack and Alice Dubes finally tie the knot!
Politics

Hit list on the Hill

Insiders say a Capitol Hill “hit list” of controversial AIDS and sexuality researchers was circulated by mistake, but scientists actually on the list say it’s further evidence that Congress is taking political potshots at their work. By Murarak Dahir

Traditional Values Coalition

NIH Head Defends Grants To Questionable Research Projects

Summary: The director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is issuing a letter this week to defend hundreds of questionable research projects brought to light by the Traditional Values Coalition last year.

Updated May 20, 2009

NIH Spends $178,000 to Study Why Prostitutes in Thailand Have High HIV Risk

By Joseph Abrams - FOXNews.com

Study: Sex scientists fear family-values scrutiny

By Tom Avril
Inquirer Staff Writer

Sex, drugs, and NIH

Email: Ted Agres - tedagres@lycos.com
News from The Scientist 2003, 4(1):20031103-06

Lawmakers Attack Federal Research on Sex Workers, Ravers

by Jocelyn Kaiser on September 25, 2008 5:04 PM

Posted: Tuesday, 21 July 2009 2:57PM

$3M NIH grant to UIC to study lesbian drinking
Lesbians & Research

The National Institutes of Health has awarded University of Illinois-Chicago nursing professor Dr. Tonda Hughes a $400,000 grant to study, “Sexual Identity and Drinking: Risks and Protective Factors.” The issue is not just whether all lesbians drink, or whether lesbians drink more than straight women. What’s important is that the NIH financial stamp of approval validated the long-overlooked field of American lesbian health per se.

See page 13 for an interview.

Honors roll in for UIC researcher

BY ROSS FORMAN

Dr. Tonda L. Hughes will receive the inaugural Distinguished Research Award, one of the most prestigious honors presented by the UIC (University of Illinois at Chicago) College of Nursing Sept. 28, marking the third career award she’s received this year.

And those go alongside her 2003 Induction into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—and countless other awards, honors and highlights to an illustrious, decades-long career. Hughes, 60, who lives in Oak Park, is a professor in the Department of Health Systems Science (HSS). She has worked in Australia, Boston and elsewhere around the world—and is an international expert in the area of alcohol use among lesbians. Hughes has secured more than $10 million in research funding throughout her career.

She is also the associate dean for global health at the UIC College of Nursing, and is co-director of BOROHN: Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health. Hughes, without question, is considered one of the greatest contributors in the field of lesbian health.

She said being selected for three awards this year, “is some recognition of my work, but the work related to LGBTQ health in general.”

“With all of the attention (given) to same-sex marriage, people are finally recognizing the impact of policies on health, including substance abuse and other things. I think people are just paying more attention,” she said. “The [UIC] award is particularly important to me because it’s recognition by my peers, which is always important to me.”

Hughes’ research dates back to the early 1990s. She said the UIC award “legitimizes my

March 3rd 1999

August 20th 2014
Not So Positive Press...

- Government Spends Nearly $2.7 Million to Study Booze-Loving...
  www.theblaze.com/.../government-spends-nearly-2-7-million-to-study-b...

- NIH Spent $2.7 Million to Find Out Why Lesbian Drink So Much....
  lonelyconservative.com/.../nih-spent-2-7-million-to-find-out-why-lesbia...

- Obama Spends 2.7 Million to Study Why Lesbians are Drunks
  www.mrconservative.com/.../6854-fed-spends-money-to-study-drunk-le...

- Study: Lesbian More Likely to Drink in Excess...
  washington.cbslocal.com/.../study-lesbians-more-likely-to-drink-in-exces...
Building a Research Career

I AM GAY
I AM STRAIGHT
I AM LESBIAN
I AM BISEXUAL
I AM TRANSGENDERED
I AM HUMAN

FREE and EQUAL in DIGNITY and RIGHTS

December 6, 2011
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

UIC College of Nursing
Acknowldegements: Research Collaborators

CHLEW Study

Lisa Alvy, PhD, VA Hospital, San Francisco
Frances Aranda, MPH, PhD, UIC
Perry Benson, PhD, U. North Dakota
Young Cho, PhD, UW-Milwaukee
Bethany Everett, PhD, UIC
Tim Johnson, PhD, UIC
Arlinda Kristjanson, PhD, U. North Dakota
Kelly Martin, MEd, MPH, UIC
Alicia Matthews, PhD, UIC
Robyn Nisi, MPH
Barth Riley, PhD, UIC
Alana Steffen, PhD, UIC
Laura Szalacha, PhD, OSU
Amelia Talley, PhD, Texas Tech
Sharon Wilsnack, PhD, U. North Dakota

Other Research Collaborators

Kimberly Balsam, PhD, Palo Alto Univ.
Wendy Bostwick, MPH, PhD
Carol Boyd, RN, PhD, FAAN, UMich
Rhonda Brown, RN, PhD, Deakin University
Laurie Drabble, San Jose State Univ.
Mickey Eliason, RN, PhD, San Fran State
Debra Kaysen, PhD, UWash-Seattle
Trish Livingston, RN, PhD, Deakin University
Mike Marshall, PhD, Univ. Pittsburgh
Sean McCabe, PhD, UMich
Ruth McNair, MD, PhD, University of Melbourne
Karen Trocki, PhD., Alcohol Research Group, Berkeley, CA
Building a Research Career

Special thanks to...

NIAAA
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Our major funder

The 100s of women who have participated in the CHLEW and related studies
Thank You!

Building a Research Career
Focused on Stigmatized and Marginalized Population Groups
Tonda L. Hughes, PhD, RN, FAAN
University of Illinois At Chicago College of Nursing