



HIV and Sexual Health Knowledge: Does it differ depending on Sexual/Gender Identity?



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Introduction

- LGBT identity is negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction, outness to family, and the world (Sommantico et al., 2018).
- HIV knowledge among college students is typically high, however, knowledge about Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was low (Stutts et al., 2022).
- Multiple studies have focused on the relationship between HIV knowledge, PrEP knowledge, sexual health knowledge, and similar factors among specific social groups but they often do not consider differences between other communities (Goedel et al., 2016; Macapagal et al., 2020; Watts & Thrasher, 2024).
- Identifying and analyzing relationships of health knowledge among social groups may assist in advocating for the improvement in informing individuals of beneficial sexual health knowledge and medications regardless of sexual identity.
- Thus, this current study analyzes sexual health knowledge, satisfaction of life, and belongingness scores between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ individuals.

Method

Participants

- Sample included 406 young adults residing in the Southeastern US
- 306 heterosexual and 100 LGB
- Sample aged 18-42 ($M = 20.49$, $SD = 3.15$); 51.5% white, 82.8% females
- Out of an original 454 participants, 48 participants were excluded from the study due not completing the survey or not providing informed consent.

Procedure

- Data drawn from a larger psychometric study.
- Participants completed questionnaires scoring HIV knowledge and sexual health knowledge.
- Participants were drawn from the SONA psychology research pool.

Measurements

Table 1

Sexual Health and HIV Knowledge Scores by LGBTQ Status

	Number of Items	Total Average of Scores	LGBTQ Individual Average Scores	Non-LGBTQ Individual Average Scores
Sexual Health Knowledge Questionnaire	18	6.66	7.07	6.52
HIV Knowledge Questionnaire	29	22.64	23.37	22.41

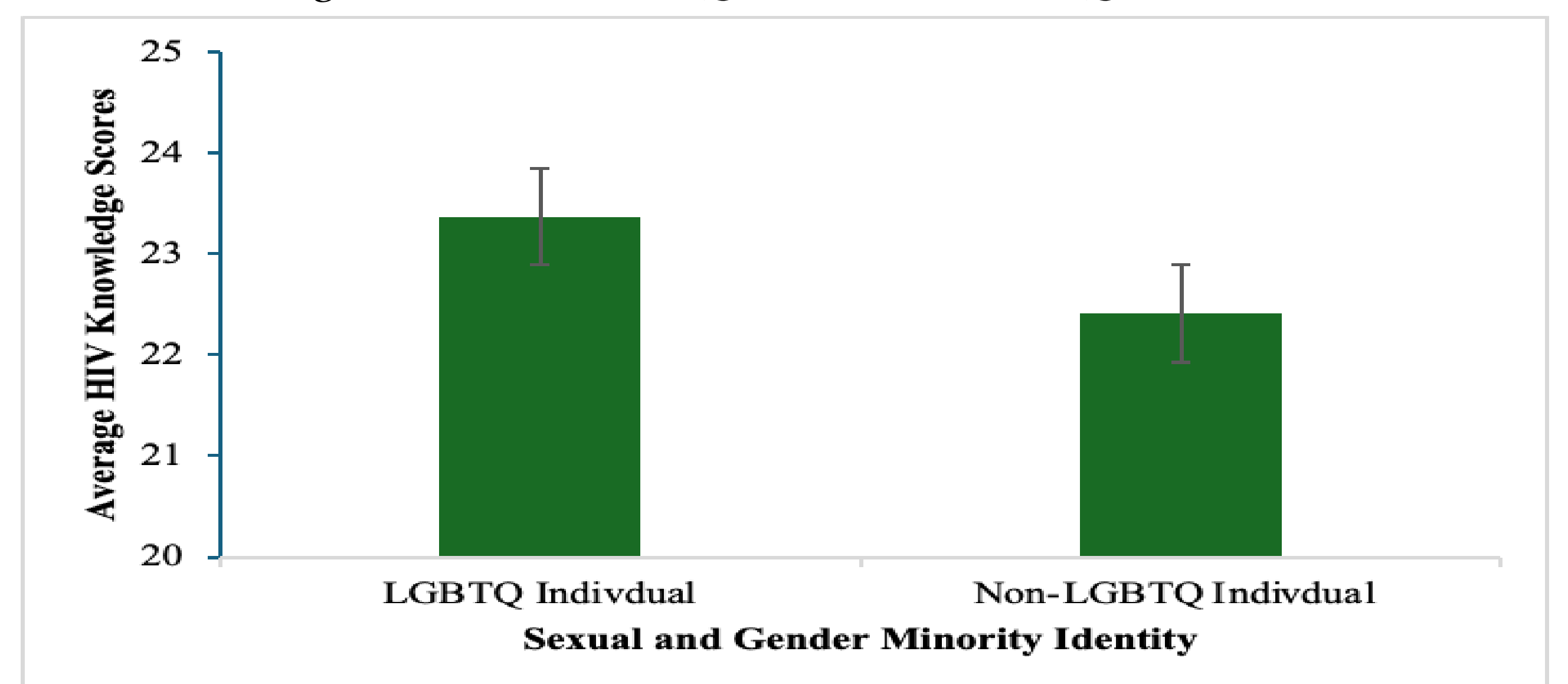
Results

Independent t-tests were conducted to analyze the difference between HIV knowledge and sexual health knowledge scores between people who identify as a part of the LGBTQ community and non-LGBTQ individuals. Members of the LGBTQ community ($M = 23.37$, $SD = 3.09$) scored significantly higher in HIV knowledge, compared to people who identify as non-LGBTQ ($M = 22.41$, $SD = 3.13$), $t(389) = 2.593$, $p = .005$, $d = .307$. However, there was no significant difference when it came to sexual health knowledge scores among LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ, $t(397) = 1.293$, $p = .098$, $d = .150$, indicating scores of sexual health knowledge were similar regardless of sexual identity.

Pearson correlations were conducted to assess the relationship between each subscale of belongingness (affiliation, connectedness, and companionship) and life satisfaction with HIV knowledge scores. None of the correlations were significant (all $ps > .10$).

Figure 1

HIV Knowledge Scores: LGBTQ vs. Non-LGBTQ Individuals



Discussion

- This study suggests that knowledge regarding HIV is higher among LGBTQ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ people.
- While gay men have a higher probability of contracting HIV through unprotected anal sex, the virus is still transmittable for people identifying as non-LGBTQ.
- Forms of HIV prevention including PrEP exist in the medical field to provide protection for those at risk, PrEP knowledge has been associated with greater HIV knowledge and those who identify as gay (Macapagal et al., 2020).
- Heterosexual men have perceived themselves as having a low risk of acquiring HIV after testing negative, giving them a false sense of security to engage in unprotected sex with their partners (Bond et al., 2015). Lack of HIV knowledge may be a potential risk to the health of others if sexual partners are unaware of how the virus is transmitted.

References: Scan QR code

