

# Promoting Social Equality and Psychological Well-Being: Addressing Discrimination Among Older Men Who Have Sex With Men

American Journal of Men's Health  
July-August 1–2  
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DOI: 10.1177/15579883231183769  
journals.sagepub.com/home/jmh  


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Dear Editor,

In a recent article, Chan et al. (2022) shed light on the fact that older men who have sex with men (OMSM) tend to experience significantly higher rates of depression and suicidal tendencies compared with the general population. It is essential that we acknowledge the struggles faced by marginalized communities, particularly OMSM and work toward promoting social equality to ensure that everyone can live without fear of discrimination or prejudice. Discrimination, social inequality, and stigma have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of OMSM (Chan et al., 2022; Corpuz, 2023).

Research reports that OMSM experience significant health disparities, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues compared with their heterosexual counterparts (Pereira, 2022). This is due to the social and cultural stigma around homosexuality, leading to discrimination and exclusion from mainstream society (Okafor et al., 2023). In addition, OMSM face discrimination within the LGBTQ+ community if they do not conform to mainstream expectations around gender expression and sexuality (Chan et al., 2023a, 2023b; Shenkman et al., 2022). A multifaceted approach is required to address these challenges, involving education, policy changes, and community advocacy. Education and awareness-raising campaigns can break down stereotypes and prejudices, promoting greater acceptance and understanding of different sexual orientations and gender identities. Policy changes such as anti-discrimination laws and inclusive health care policies can protect the rights of OMSM and ensure they have access to resources and support for physical and mental health.

Community advocacy is crucial in promoting social equality and psychological well-being among OMSM. This can involve creating safe spaces where individuals

can connect with others who share similar experiences, providing access to counseling and mental health support services (Maksut et al., 2018). Building a sense of community and solidarity can reduce the isolation and loneliness experienced by many OMSM, which can contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Overcoming the invisibility faced by this population is a key challenge. Many OMSM may not feel comfortable disclosing their sexuality or seeking support services due to fear of discrimination or social stigma (Alba et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to create an environment where individuals feel safe and supported in disclosing their sexuality and seeking resources for physical and mental health.

As a society, we must recognize the experiences of OMSM and work toward promoting social equality and psychological well-being for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Addressing discrimination and promoting social equality is critical in promoting the psychological well-being of OMSM. By working together, we can create a world where everyone can live without discrimination and stigma, and where OMSM can thrive and live their lives to the fullest.

## Acknowledgments

AC would like to express his gratitude to Prof. Elsie Yan and Dr. Ben Ku from the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.


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