



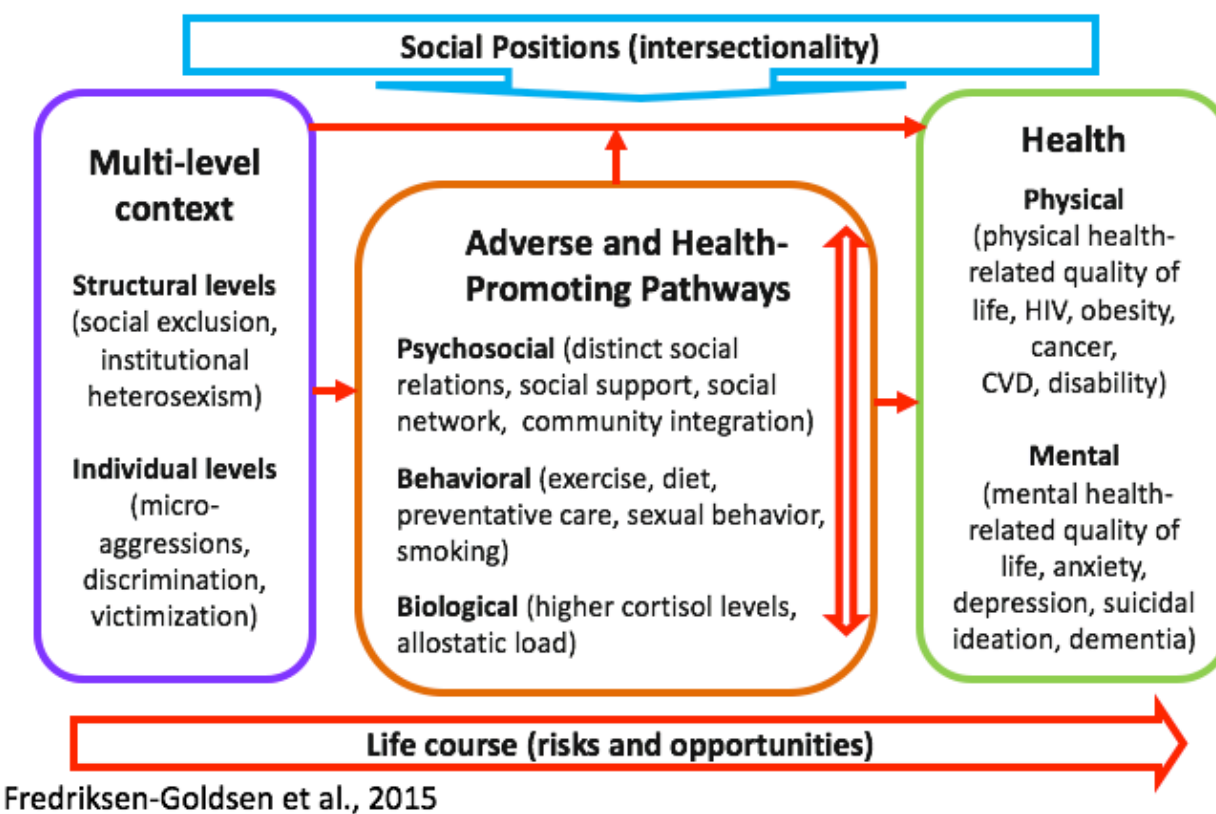
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Background

- Transgender and intersex older adults largely invisible in aging health research
- Estimates of US transgender population aged 65+ at 700,000 or more
- Population estimates for intersex people range from 1.7 to 4%
- Intersex and transgender people differ, but there may be similarities (e.g., hormone use, gender-based discrimination)
- Extremely limited research on health needs of intersex older adults
- Transgender older adults at higher risk of poor health, disability, depression, and perceived stress

Health Equity Model



Study Objectives

- To explore the health concerns of transgender and intersex older adults

Methods

- In-depth interviews (n=4), 90-122 minutes
- Recruitment through community partnerships (e.g., Openhouse, Lavender Seniors, Senior Centers), and participant referral/word of mouth
- \$50 gift card for completing interview
- Thematic analysis of transcripts

Results

Physical health

“Good health means keep doing, just doing, regardless of what’s happening, just keep doing it.”

“For transgender those health problems are extreme. You got so many health problems. High blood pressure, diabetes, you have got infections. Their systems are already weak.”

“I was taking the hormones, the testosterone so I was having all these blood tests. I’m also on warfarin, which is a blood thinner. [...] The clot came up here somewhere and I almost died from it.”

Mental health

“Intersex people do not have good feelings about themselves. I know I don’t to a certain degree. I’ve tried to commit suicide, and there are times when I was in a psychiatric ward.”

“Depression. I’m not sure because correlation is not causation, but I still think it has to do with being on testosterone”

“I have anxiety. I take, my gosh, I take two pills at night to help me sleep but I have a hard time sleeping.”

Participants

- Gender identity: 1 male, 1 trans male, 1 female, 1 trans female
- Sex assigned at birth: 2 intersex, 1 male, 1 female
- Race: Native American, Chinese, White
- Ages: 61-77
- Education: Some college to graduate degree



Isolation & Discrimination

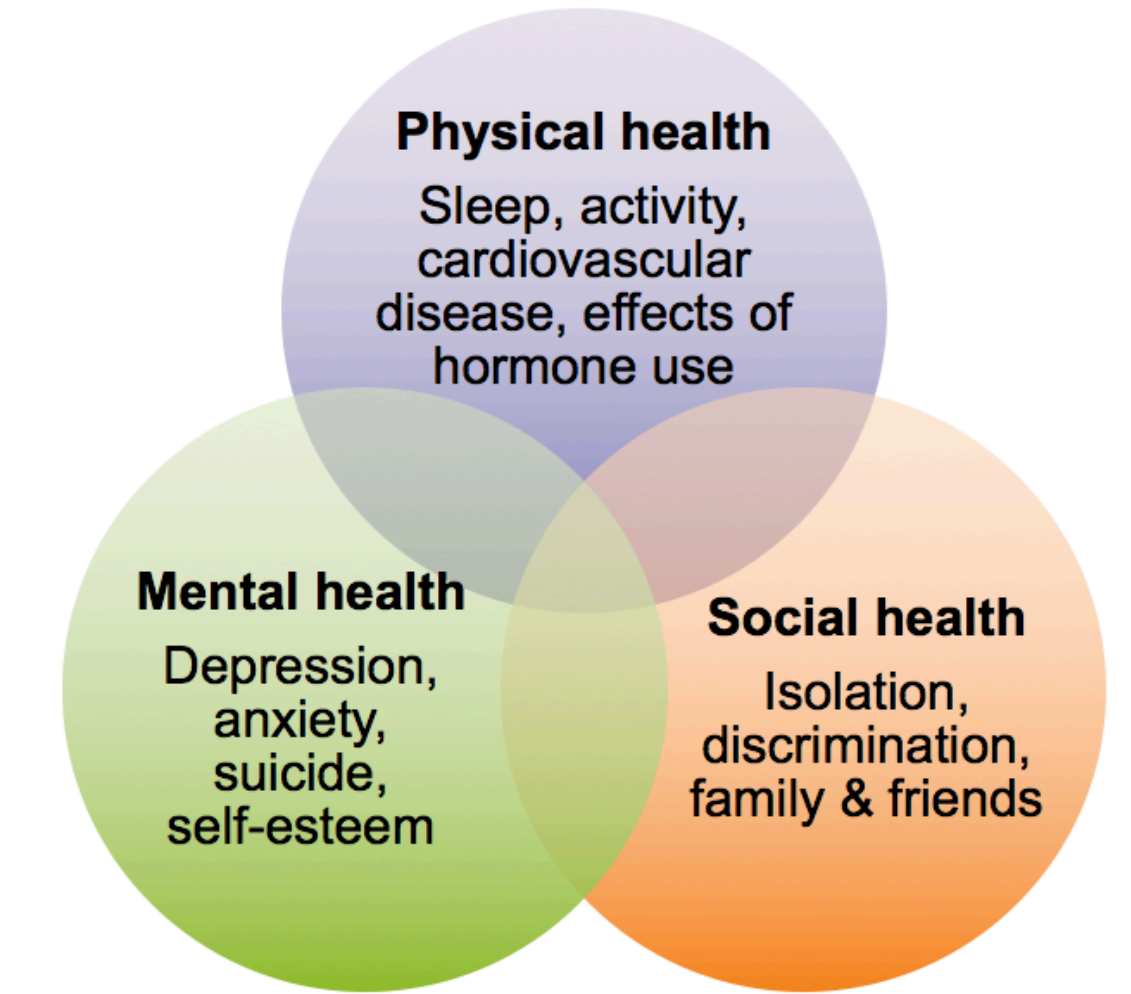
“If they beat the crap out of you in your eighties, you’re just plain dead. Why risk it? There’s now a growing phenomenon of people going back into the closet as they are older because you don’t want to bring it down on you. If you’re in some rest home, even here.”

“We did all this work to come out of the closet and now we’re being forced back in because it’s a matter of survival.”

“Often family and friends are not there”

“Things like high blood pressure and that isn’t just from eating fried chicken [...] All that poison [discrimination] being pumped at you for decades. That’s got to add up.”

Thematic Areas



Tips for Health Professionals

“Help people feel comfortable when they’re helpless.”

- Employ trans people; include intersex older adults in community services; ensure medical records capture and respect pronouns

Discussion

- Fear of and actual discrimination may be a source of depression and anxiety
- Physical and mental health concerns were interconnected with social isolation
- This pilot study is limited by its small sample
- Further research on the health of transgender and intersex older adults is needed
- Consider enhancing social support and health provider cultural humility for care and services

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