

# Treating substance abuse in sexual minorities: Providing appropriate services

K. Michelle Peavy, M.A.

Annesa Flentje Santa, M.A., M.S.

Bryan N. Cochran, Ph.D.

Jennifer Cooper, B.A.

The University of Montana

# Introduction

- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals seeking substance abuse treatment
  - Had more severe SUDs than non-GLBT clients
  - Had higher rates of mental health problems than non-GLBT clients

(Cochran & Cauce, 2006)

# GLBT Clients and Treatment

- Sexual orientation **is** an important variable in treatment (McDermott, Tyndall & Lichtenberg, 1989).  
Yet,
- There is no accepted definition of GLBT-specific treatment (Cochran, Peavy, & Robohm, 2007).

# Research Questions

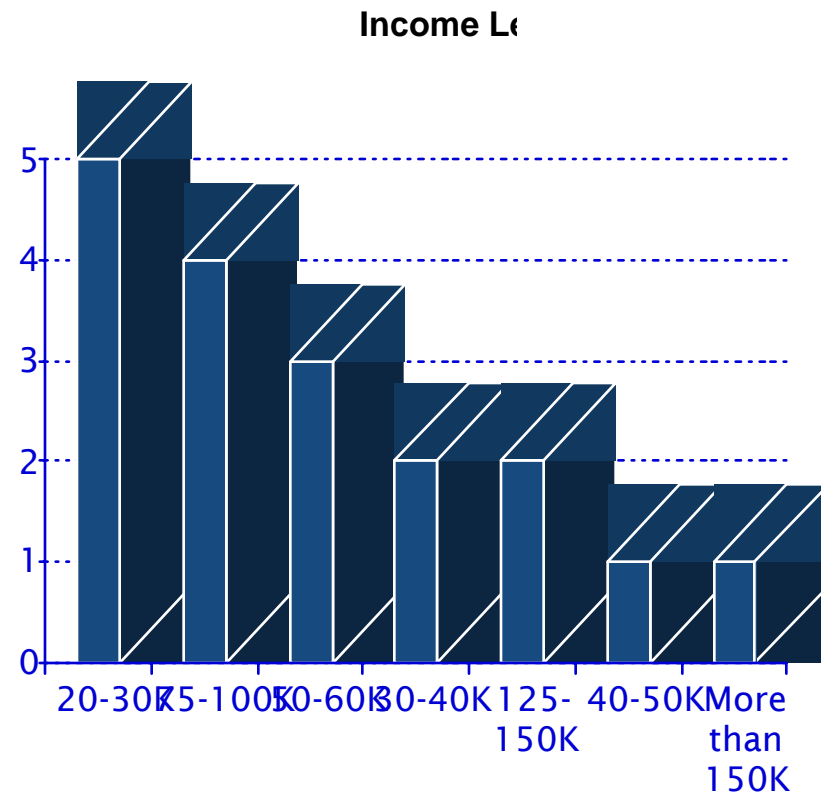
- How is GLBT-specific treatment different from other treatment?
- How might GLBT-specific treatment better serve the GLBT population?

# Methods

- Participants: (N=20) Clients seeking treatment at 5 GLBT-specific treatment sites
- Sample details:
  - 75% Caucasian
  - 25% Multiracial
  - 90% male, 10% female, 0% transgender
  - Mean age = 39.79 (*SD* = 9.65)

# Participants (cont.)

- Sample
  - 80% identified as gay, 10% lesbian, 5% bisexual, 5% as heterosexual and “other”
  - 25% have a graduate degree



# Methods

- Our survey gathered information regarding:
  - Current and past substance use
  - Reasons for selecting current treatment
  - Experiences in current treatment
  - Experiences in past treatment

# Results

- Substance use (n = 18 answered)
  - 38.8% reported alcohol as primary substance
  - 50% reported problematic methamphetamine use
  - Other drugs mentioned:
    - Opiates (11%)
    - Cocaine (11%)
    - Benzodiazepines (11%)



# Results

- “Why have you chosen this particular treatment agency?” (n = 18 answered)
  - GLBT focus (77.7%)
    - Of those, 57.1% ranked this as the top reason
  - Recommendation (44.4%)
  - Location (44.4%)
  - Financial reasons (33.3%)
  - Specific aspects of the program (e.g., mental health, HIV, Meth; 33.3%)
  - Reputation (27.7%)

# Results

- Discrimination
  - 14.3% reported experiencing discrimination at a non-GLBT specific treatment agency
- Reported treatment preference
  - 50.0% reported that it “would be difficult” to be in a treatment group with non-GLBT individuals

# Discussion

- GLBT-specific treatment fulfills a need for this population.
  - Having specialized GLBT services was important for this sample, participants reported feeling more comfortable with sexual minority peers.
- Financial reasons and location play a role in treatment choice.
  - These factors might also be a barrier to treatment for other GLBT individuals.

# Study Limitations

- Small sample
  - Difficulties recruiting
- Potential non-representative sample
  - Sampling bias
  - Generalizability
  - Implications for research with underserved GLBT individuals

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