

Square One

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Smoking Prevalence and Cessation among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Arizona Residents

Nationally, there is no single survey which gives a good estimate of the smoking rates among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Several individual studies, however, suggest that LGBT individuals smoke at much higher rates than heterosexuals.¹

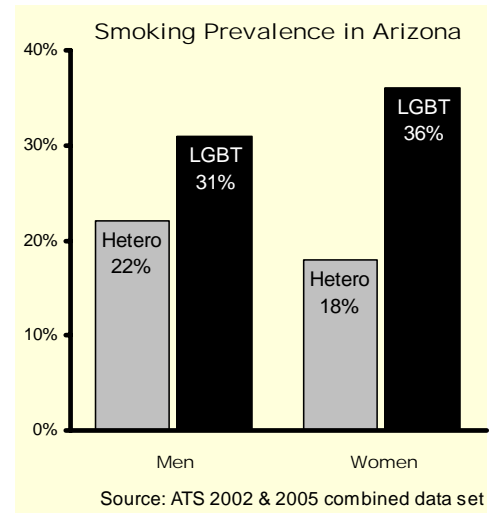
The Arizona Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) contains an item asking respondents to describe their sexual orientation. This information allows us to estimate the prevalence of cigarette smoking among this population. In a combined dataset from the ATS 2002 and 2005, only about eight percent of the respondents chose not to answer the question about sexual orientation. (By comparison, four percent did not disclose their race, and 16 percent did not disclose their annual income.) Of respondents who did indicate their orientation, about two and a half percent identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or "something else" (other than heterosexual).

About 31 percent of gay, bisexual, and transgender men report being current smokers. This rate is nearly fifty percent higher than heterosexual men, about 22 percent of whom smoke. About 36 percent of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women report being current smokers. This prevalence is double that for heterosexual women: 18 percent.

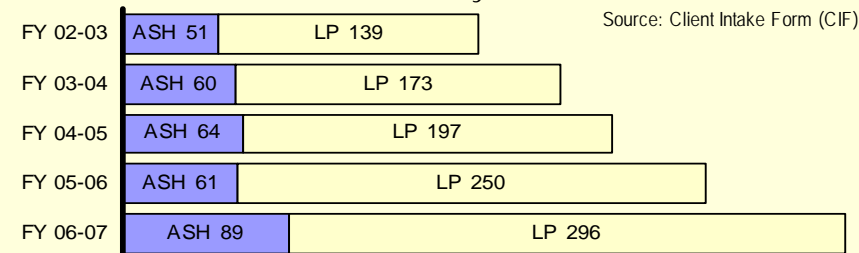
The Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Tobacco Education and Prevention (BTEP) is committed to serving communities in particular need of their services. As part of this commitment, the Client Intake Form (CIF) for cessation services includes an item that asks respondents about their sexual orientation in order to monitor how well this population is being served. In the most recent fiscal year (2006-07), only a relatively small proportion of clients (about 10%) chose not to answer this question. Of those who did answer, about six percent identified themselves as LGBT.

Compared to the heterosexual cessation clients, the LGBT clients are significantly younger (average age 40, compared to 47 for heterosexuals). When asked how they heard about the cessation program, LGBT clients were more likely to have heard from friends, and less likely to have heard from a physician. Ethnically, LGBT clients were more Hispanic (26%), African American (10%), or Native American (8%) than the heterosexual clients (16%, 5%, and 2%, respectively).

The number of LGBT clients in cessation services has doubled over the past five fiscal years: from 190 clients in FY 2002-03 to 385 in FY 2006-07. Of the people who call ASHLine, three to four percent each year are LGBT. Of those who enroll in Local Project (LP) community classes, the LGBT percentage has grown steadily from four percent in FY 2002-03 to almost eight percent in FY 2006-07. The pattern of increases in enrollment during the last fiscal year is



Numbers of LGBTs in Cessation, by Fiscal Year



consistent with a response to the recent smoking ban in bars and restaurants. However, the pattern would also be consistent with a general growing recognition of the hazards of smoking among LGBT residents. Further research is required to explore these and other alternative explanations around LGBT resident's motives for quitting tobacco and utilizing available cessation services.

¹ Ryan, H., Wortley, P., Easton, A., Pederson, L., Greenwood, G. (2001) Smoking among lesbians, gays and bisexuals: a review of the literature. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 21: 142-149

This brief report was prepared by the Evaluation, Research and Development Unit at the University of Arizona. For more information contact Sylvia Ramirez at sramirez@u.arizona.edu or 520/318-7259 x 175. Funded by the Arizona Department of Health Services.