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LGBTQ+ COLLEGE STUDENTS' WELL-BEING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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LGBTQ+ College Students' Well-being and Physical Activity

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ABSTRACT

Many college students experience a downswing in mental well-being once beginning college. Studies have shown that the mental well-being of many college students are negatively impacted by alcohol consumption, cigarette use, and lower grades. Along with those factors, poor sleep habits are also linked to poor performance and overall well-being of students. LGBTQ+ college students experience discriminatory stressors, such as bullying, compounded with the stressors of college life which can lead to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Physical activity has been shown to improve well-being and depression symptoms. It has also been proven to be as effective as psychological and drug therapies. Many LGBTQ+ college students are turned away from sports due to LGBTQ+ cultural norms, as well as bullying from peers. This project employed a case study narrative approach of LGBTQ+ college students. 5 participants, ranging from 18-21 years of age and various sexual orientations, were interviewed about how physical activity has affected their well-being. We predict that LGBTQ+ college students who participate in regular physical activity will express lower levels of anxiety and depression along with greater levels of well-being.

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