LONELINESS, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LIFESTYLES

IN

GAY AND HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Lifestyle, social support and loneliness in gay women
have been poorly documented. Further to this no
comparisons have been made with heterosexual women in
these areas. The present investigation assessed
lifestyle, social support and loneliness and involved two
samples, 87 heterosexual women and 63 homosexual women.
Of particular interest in the area of social support was
support offered by family and friends, as perceived by
the respondents. Lifestyle variables were studied to
possibly offer an explanation if any differences were
found between the two groups. Loneliness was assessed as
a multidimensional construct involving four types of
relational deficits. Finally variables predicting
loneliness were explored. Results indicated that the gay
women suffer relationship deficits in the areas of family
and community. They also perceived less support from the
family than the heterosexual women, and had less kin in
their support network, relying on friends more in times
of need. This may be because friends of the gay women,
both heterosexual and homosexual, tended to react more
positively than parents, to finding out about their
lesbianism. The variables of perceived support were the
main predictors of family and friends loneliness in
heterosexual women. These and variables associated with
lesbianism, such as feelings of isolation and who was
first told, were found to be the best predictors of the
different areas of loneliness in gay women. The results
suggest that gay women have become alienated from their
families and society in general.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

LIFESTYLE

Differences in patterns of lifestyle originated as far
back as 1867, when lifestyle was viewed as economically
determined. Many people studied the use of the term
"lifestyle" but it was not until 1972 that "Index
Medicus" began indexing articles under lifestyle.
However Coreil, Levin and Jacobs (1985) reviewed the
articles in the "Index Medicus" from 1972 - 1983 and
discovered that a majority of these articles referred to
lifestyle in the sense of specific behaviours identified
as risk factors for disease and accidental death.

In the context of health, lifestyle has been defined as
"all those behaviours over which a person has control;
including actions that affect a person's health risks,
and activities that have an impact on health status that
are a regular part of one's daily living pattern"
(Walker et al, 1986).

Kamler in 1984, quoted by Coreil, Levin and Jacobs (1985)
defined lifestyle as behaviours and attitudes which are
adopted in order to fit in with one's social groups, a
notion he contrasted with "life philosophy", the personal
identity which one nourishes regardless of how others
think or act. The notion of social conformity is
fundamental to this view of lifestyle.

Lifestyle, simply stated, is an individual's unique
living habits. Living habits or lifestyle can be divided
into three areas, namely, attitudes, relationships, and
living arrangements.

Because of the health view, the majority of existing
lifestyle assessment measures are health hazard/health
risk appraisal tools that focus primarily on health-
protecting or preventive behaviours. These are based on
a risk-reduction model rather than on a health
enhancement model.

However, none of the scales or approaches looked at
general differences between two groups. Although Kamler's
(1984) definition comes close to looking at differences
between two groups, no scale or lifestyle measurement was
mentioned.

This study is interested in comparing two groups in
lifestyle, as well as social support and loneliness.
Using Kamler's lifestyle definition of "behaviour and
attitudes adopted to fit one's social group ..... the
personal identity which one nourishes regardless of how
others think or act", two groups in which we could expect

a difference in lifestyle would be heterosexual and homosexual women.

Looking at the first subdivision of lifestyle, that of attitudes, O'Connell (1980) states indications are that women's lifestyles may be related to attitudes towards career, marriage, personality and the concept of the women's role. The gay women's attitudes are different to heterosexual women regarding marriage and the traditional women's role, as they choose/prefer the close company, friendship and intimacy of another woman.

A study that looked at personality of homosexual and heterosexual women, is that of Adelman, 1977. Adelman compared professionally employed lesbian and heterosexual women, on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). With the exception of the Schizophrenia (Sc) scale, no difference was found on the clinical scales. There was a significantly higher elevation on the Masculinity/femininity (Mf) scale for lesbians. A further analysis on the data of the Sc scale showed that the difference was due to a difference in degree of social alienation. Item content of this scale deals with poor family relationships and a more general withdrawal of interest from other people and relationships.

Adelman (1977) also analyzed the data to a second variable - living status, and again found significant differences. Single lesbians scored lowest on the F scale while lesbian couples scored the highest, with heterosexual women falling in between. The F scale consists of items that are answered almost always in the same direction by the normal standardized group. The high score may be explained by lesbian couples having a higher degree of nonconformity and unconventionality.

The biggest difference between lesbians and heterosexual women, in lifestyle, is their sexual orientation. Most research on homosexuals has typically concentrated on men. It has only been recently that research on gay women has begun. Few studies have been done on lesbian relationships with a comparison to heterosexual relationships.

Peplau et al (1978) looked solely at lesbian relationships. They suggest that two distinct value orientations may influence gay women's relationships. Firstly, dyadic attachment, which is concerned with emphasis on establishing emotionally close and relatively secure love relationships. The second, personal autonomy, emphasises independence and self-actualization that may lead to a questioning of traditional patterns of love relationships. It seems likely that all close relationships require a balancing of the desire for intimacy and independence, that is not just inherent for gay women. However it has been found that gay women tend

to emphasize the emotional quality of a love relationship and tend to develop more meaningful emotional attachments to other females than males, and find it easier to achieve open communication and emotional expression in same sex relationships. (Peplau et al, 1978).

Peplau et al (1978), quote Abbott and Love, in suggesting that gay women, unlike heterosexual women, are not afraid to develop qualities of independence, self-actualization, strength and intelligence, and that in preferring a same sex partner, gay women choose personal autonomy over culturally prescribed female roles. However emphasis on autonomy may lead women to prefer relationships that are less exclusive and last only so long as they remain personally satisfying. This may be reflected by the number of relationships they have been in or by feelings of loneliness.

Peplau et al's study found that most gay women in the sample reported high degrees of closeness and satisfaction in their current relationships, and a majority of them also indicated they and their partner shared equally in power. These two divisions were found not to be mutually exclusive with individual differences in the importance given to attachment and autonomy. Gay women's social characteristics, including attitudes, socioeconomic status and memberships in various groups may also have important effects on relationship values.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) looked at relationship quality of partners in heterosexual married and cohabiting partners and gay men and lesbian relationships. They looked at three dimensions of relationship quality, these being love for ones partner, liking of ones partner and general relationship satisfaction.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) found that the four types of partners differed in both relationship quality and variables predictive of relationship quality. The four partner types did not differ in liking of partner, and cohabiting partners had the lowest love for partner and relationship satisfaction scores relative to the other three partner types. Gay men, lesbian and heterosexual married partners were indistinguishable from one another on these scores.

As predicted married partners reported the most barriers to leaving the relationship. Gay women expressed a strong preference for reciprocal dyadic dependency. They also found that lesbian partners were more masculine than married women. Because lesbian partners have been found to be unconventional in their sex role behaviour, Kurdek and Schmitt state their high masculinity scores were not surprising.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) predicted that the heterosexual

and homosexual cohabitants would report more shared decision making than the married partners would. This prediction was only partially confirmed in that reciprocal dependency and equality of power were particularly important for the relationship quality of lesbian couples. Kurdek and Schmitt only used childless couples as children affect relationship qualities, and only monogamous couples since "open" relationships also affect quality.

Research on heterosexuals frequently notes the tendency for the man to assume the responsibility for decision-making on certain tasks and for the woman to be responsible for only traditional feminine tasks. In woman to woman units, economic independence, greater productivity, personal autonomy and responsibility for one's own life, makes the relationship inherently different in structure from traditional heterosexual partnerships. In addition, gay women relationships tend to exhibit a high degree of understanding between partners as well as less restrictive role playing and a degree of autonomy and attachment which may be less available in heterosexual relationships. Most researchers have noted that butch-femme role playing does not characterize lesbian partnerships either in sexual interactions or in general (Lynch & Reilly, 1986).

Lynch and Reilly (1986) researched lesbian relationships to look at the extent of equality and role-playing. They found that 40% of the individuals in the study reported an equal sharing of responsibility for chores. The majority of relationships were characterized by financial sharing and equality, and equality in decision making. Unlike heterosexual relationships in which the woman is rarely perceived either by her partner or in particular by others, as an equal bread winner, both partners in a lesbian relationship assume an instrumental role in their financial contributions (Lynch & Reilly, 1986).

Martin and Lyon (1983), state that some couples have a relationship like a marriage where assets are mutually owned, whereas others do not like to pool their resources and so put up half the rent, food money, and maintain separate bank accounts. Assets remain owned by whoever bought them so that there are no hassles about property should they break up.

Albro and Tulley (1979) surveyed gay women in an effort to determine how they functioned within the heterosexual macroculture and homosexual microculture. They acknowledged the fact that the lesbian remains hidden in society due to general societal attitudes against homosexuality. In order to cope with society's condemnations, gay women tend to unite with each other in lesbian subcultures which coexist within the larger society (Albro & Tulley, 1979).

In their study half of the women had no jointly held property, bank accounts, loans, stocks or motor vehicle. Albro and Tulley's study suggested that if a women is involved in what she considers a permanent gay relationship, she is willing to support her partner financially.

Part of Albro and Tulley's survey was designed for women who regarded themselves as involved in a lesbian relationship. These women did most or all of their socializing together and saw their relationship as being a permanent commitment. Lesbians who wished to marry gave similar reasons as the heterosexual person - romance, financial and legal advantages, security and the desire to make a public commitment. Those who did not wish to marry already felt secure in their relationship or they objected to the institution of marriage. It seems that regardless of the absence of legal commitment, the reactions of gay women to sexual relations outside of the primary relationship are similar to the reactions of heterosexual women.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) also looked at social support of couples because of the finding that social support buffers stress experience of both individuals and couples. Another reason for this area of interest was due to findings that heterosexual and homosexual couples may rely on different types of social support systems.

Homosexual couples may be selective about whom they disclose the nature of their relationship, therefore their social support system may be more restricted than those of heterosexual couples. Also, because homosexual couples may disclose themselves more to friends than family, friends may function as a stronger social support system than family.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) found that gay and lesbian partners perceived less social support from family than did married partners. Because married and cohabiting partners did not differ in social support from family, the social stigma associated with homosexuality may be greater than that associated with cohabiting without marriage.

Albro and Tulley (1979) examined sources of support and strain on gay women. Results showed they felt strained when dealing with heterosexual people, and that economic institutions were seen as not being supportive of lesbian lifestyles. Most of the women felt that they had to "act" like heterosexual women on the job, with their family or at social events. Support systems seemed to come from the homosexual subcultures and friendship circles, not from the larger society.

Albro and Tulley (1979) enquired into familial and general social relationships. Only 28.4% reported telling their mother of their lesbianism and even fewer chose to tell their father. Reasons given for not telling family members were fears of misunderstanding and rejection. Respondents had revealed their lesbianism to a variety of individuals outside of the family. All had told other gay women and 94.2% had told other heterosexual women. They rarely told employers, work acquaintances, teachers, school friends and neighbors. They were more likely to look to women for support and the response was usually positive and totally accepting which suggests the respondents had carefully selected the individual to whom they could confide (Albro & Tulley, 1979).

Albro and Tulley (1979) stated that it was difficult to know whether an untapped source of emotional support for the gay woman exists within the family. Since so few had been willing to look to family members, especially parents, for support, it is possible that the family is indeed a potential source of support for the gay woman.

In general there is a small amount of comparative research done in the area of relationships for heterosexual and homosexual women. What has been completed however suggests a number of points. Firstly that gay women have meaningful emotional attachments in their relationships making it easier to achieve open communication and emotional expression. Particularly important to the lesbian is the equality of power and sharing of chores and bills in the relationship. This does not necessarily carry over to the ownership of assets however. Reports show less mutually owned assets such as bank accounts, cars, and property in gay relationships.

Secondly, gay women are more likely to look to women for support, with couples tending to perceive less support from the family. The one thing that gay women missed the most was a family home with their children.

In the area of living arrangements little has been written about lesbian lifestyles and as West (1977) points out, little could be discovered about their lifestyles, because gay women kept quietly and unobtrusively to themselves. To date a great majority of lesbians still prefer to lead a secret, double life, being open among other lesbians, but silent to family and work mates. Fear of exposure to employers or colleagues at work worries gay women, for fear of damaging their career prospects, if not dismissal. The necessity for constant vigilance in keeping up a facade of heterosexuality produces in some gay women, a feeling of almost unbearable strain, which can lead to depression. Those too afraid or isolated to discover and visit gay

meeting places, or join gay organizations are subject to great loneliness (West, 1977).

Albro and Tulley (1979) asked gay women whether they felt constrained to present themselves as heterosexual in a number of settings. Most felt constrained with their family, while half reported attempting to present themselves as heterosexual at work and in the public. Half feared losing their jobs if their lesbianism were to become known to their employer, others stated that their jobs would be made more difficult if their sexual orientation were discovered. Some individuals believed they had already lost their jobs due to their lesbianism.

Over 73% of the respondents felt very much or somewhat isolated from society as a result of their sexual orientation, with many of them considering society's acceptance of them as important. Although they feel isolated and desire social acceptance, the respondents were unwilling to make an active effort to appear heterosexual in order to enhance their acceptance. Because of this lack of acceptance by the heterosexual macroculture, gay women turn to the homosexual microculture for their social life and social systems (Albro & Tulley, 1979).

There is a relatively high proportion of latecomers to homosexuality among females. Many of them are women in retreat from unsuccessful marriages and unhappy relationships with men, and some may already have children. Sometimes the situation arises where a gay woman still feels the need to try marriage as a possible solution to the problem. In other cases, the woman only realises the nature of the problem after years of marriage. When a marriage breaks up due to a wife's attachment to another man, she doesn't necessarily lose the custody of her children. If she leaves the marriage to set up with another women, her fitness to keep the children may be vigorously contested. One deprivation felt more often and accurately by gay women was the absence of a family home with children (West, 1977).

Like West, Martin and Lyon (1983) point out that most gay women keep their private lives separate from their work and also from some friends. In their experience when guests enter the house they become "unmarried women friends" although it wasn't always easy to make the sudden switch in roles.

They do point out that a vast majority of gay American women lead quiet lives, much akin to the lives of most other Americans, with most opting for a one-to-one longterm relationship as an ideal. Being a lesbian does not mean that they automatically reject all the values they have been taught.

Martin and Lyon (1983) feel that living arrangements of lesbian couples are influenced by professional careers - again it relates to the fear of losing a job and hanging on to what they have worked for and achieved. One example is two women pretending to be room mates, taking an apartment with two rooms, the second being a spare that is easily converted when people come to visit.

The tendency was for the gay women in Albro and Tulley's study (1979) to live in households without men. Those who lived alone or with persons who were not their spouse or lover, tended to want to change their living arrangements; but of those living with their partners, they hoped to maintain their living situation indefinitely. Two major reasons given for why the women did not wish to maintain their present living situation were loneliness and lack of independence.

In the area of living arrangements very little has been written on lesbian lifestyles due to the gay women remaining hidden from society and no comparative research has been done at all. Of the few studies that have been done we can see that the gay woman may lead a double life, switching roles between the lesbian and heterosexual society in which she may interact. Some reasons for why a gay woman may remain hidden are the fear of exposure and the effect on her career prospects and reaction of friends and work mates.

Other points of interest to come out of the studies are firstly, the a large number of gay women feel isolated from society while others feel that society's acceptance of them is important. Secondly there is a high proportion of late comers to homosexuality. Many of the late comers feel the need to try and live successfully in relationships with a man, so as to be more acceptable to society. Finally gay women tend to live in households where there are no men.

We can see from the limited research that is available that there have been differences found between heterosexual and homosexual women in some of the areas of lifestyle. Because no comparison to heterosexual women has been made at all in the area of living arrangements, a lifestyle measure is needed to see if differences in lifestyle between two groups can be recorded. In this study there were two sets of lifestyle questions. The first set was for women with and without partners, regardless of their sexual orientation. These questions dealt with two areas of lifestyle, namely relationships and attitudes. Relationship questions looked at how long the respondent had been in or out of the relationship, how many relationships they had been in, major reasons for the relationship to break up, sharing of power and bills, joint accounts, and how they met. Questions on attitude asked what the respondent's concept of the

woman's role was, how important their independence was, if they believed in sexual relations outside of a relationship. All questions were based on the findings of Albro and Tulley's study (1979).

The second set of questions were for lesbians only, and they dealt with aspects of openness, isolation from society, how they presented themselves in public, and the responses of people knowing about their lesbianism. The openness and isolation question came from Albro and Tulley's study (1979). The rest of the questions came from the Jay and Young Gay Report (1979).

The two sets of questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

The relationship between social structure and lifestyle remains unclear. However it would appear that social network and lifestyle are related. Both are a part of one's daily living habits and have a positive and negative effect on the individual. The next section looks at the aspect of social support and differences between the two groups of women.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support has been described in a variety of ways. Some studies associate support with the availability of a spouse or confidant, close ties with friends and the nearness of relatives. One study defined support as information that leads the person to believe they are loved, esteemed and a member of a network. Other definitions include the exchange of material goods, services, emotional comfort, intimacy, assistance, problem-solving and being enmeshed in the local community. It has also been suggested that social relationships have multiple functions such as sharing concerns, intimacy, opportunity for nuturance, reassurance of worth and guidance. (Brandt & Wenert, 1981).

One specific definition sees social support as any input provided directly by another to help the target person with emotional issues, to provide physical assistance or material aid or to impart cognitive guidance (Stokes & Wilson, 1984). This definition has categorized social support into different types of support, namely, emotional support (feeling of closeness, intimate interactions, esteem building, comfort and encouragement), the provision of material goods or tangible assistance, and cognitive guidance such as advice, information and feedback. Another type of social support which is not included in the last definition, is socializing - having a companion for dining, attending movies, sharing interests.

It is widely accepted that social support is a multidimensional construct, but Barrera (1986) states that the social support concepts can be organised into three broad categories. First is social embeddedness which refers to the connections that individuals have to significant others in their social environment. Measures attempt to quantify the number of supporters or amount of social contact. Next is perceived social support. This is the cognitive appraisal of being reliably connected to others. Many measures of perceived social support incorporate two dimensions - perceived availability and adequacy of supportive ties. The measures attempt to capture the individual's confidence that adequate support would be available if it was needed, or to characterize an environment as helpful. Finally is enacted support which are the actions that others perform when they render assistance to a focal person.

Heller and Swindles model of social support is quoted in several studies (Procidano & Hellar, 1983; Oritt, Paul &

Behranan, 1985; Barrera, 1986). This model distinguishes among social network characteristics, perceptions of social support and support seeking behaviours, addressing all three areas already described by Barrera. In this model, social networks are defined as social connections in the environment. The availability of these connections contribute to an individuals perception that he/she can rely on others for help. The support seeking behaviours reflect the efforts initiated by the individual to interact with others. The perceived availability of support is also related to the individual's decision to seek out support from others.

However, perceived social support, and actual support provided by the network may not be identical. Perceived social support is probably influenced by within person factors including long term traits and temporary changes in mood and attitude. Both may influence the perception of whether support is available or has been provided. It is suggested that disturbed individuals may perceive less support than actually exists for them. Perceived social support is also subjective to memory effects.

In summary, research done in this area has shown social support to be made up of different types of aid, such as physical help, cognitive guidance, material aid, and emotional assistance, that is perceived by the target person to be available. It is this view that is adopted in this study. However regardless of how it is conceptualized, social support would seem to have two basic elements - perception that there is a sufficient number of available others to whom one can turn to in times of need, and a degree of satisfaction with the support perceived to be available. These two basic elements are measured in this study along with the number of kin and non-kin in the perceived support.

Two models have been proposed that explain how social support and emotional health, well-being and loneliness are related. The first conceptualizes social support as a basic human need that must be satisfied in order for an individual to enjoy a sense of wellbeing (Sandler & Barrera, 1984). Human attachment would be seen as having an essential role in sustaining positive adjustment. The second model emphasizes the rate of support as a moderator or "buffer" of stress. Specifically, the relationship between stress and maladjustment is thought to be greater for those who lack support than for those who are adequately supported.

These two models, the main effect model and the buffering model are also discussed by Cohen and Wills, 1985. Under the main effect model social support could be beneficial because larger social networks are seen as providing people with regular positive experiences and a set of stable socially rewarding roles in the community. This

kind of support could be related to overall well-being because it provides positive affect, a sense of predictability and stability in one's life situation, and a recognition of self-worth. Integration into a social network may also help negative experiences to decrease. This could occur through the network having an influence on health-related behavioural patterns such as smoking, drinking or help seeking, or through emotionally induced effects on the neuroendocrine or immune system affecting physical health (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

The buffering model, which dominates recent literature, states that the perception that others can and will provide necessary resources at the appraisal stage, may redefine the potential for harm posed by the situation and improve one's perceived ability to cope with demands placed on them. Support may also eliminate stress reactions by providing a solution to the problem, by reducing the perceived importance of the problem, by facilitating healthful behaviour or by having an effect on the neuroendocrine system so that people are less reactive to the stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

The review done by Cohen & Willis (1985) concluded that there was evidence for both models described above. Evidence for a buffering model is found when the social support measure assesses interpersonal resources that are responsive to the needs elicited by stressful events. Evidence for the main effect model is found when the support measure assesses a person's degree of integration in a large community social network.

A critical factor that makes it difficult to integrate findings on the effects of social support is the variety of conceptually different instruments used to assess it. Most measurement approaches found in the literature appear to assess distinctly different aspects of support.

Networks can be assessed in terms of structural and functional dimensions such as size, density, multiplexity, provision of information, comfort, material aid and so on. The four variables that are the most important descriptors of social networks are size, number of people, percentage of family and density. Previous research suggests size of ones network is related to its ability to provide social support, and satisfy one's needs. Dense networks are ones where members are highly interconnected therefore it would seem that dense networks would be cohesive, strong and effective social support. However some data suggests lower density networks may be more helpful than higher ones. One study found that denser networks gave greater quantities of support but recipients were less satisfied with the support they received (Stokes, 1985; Stokes & Wilson, 1984).

Two of the available measurements that are often used, for assessing social support, are the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ), and the Perceived Social Support (PSS) measure. These two scales measure the basic elements of social support that were mentioned earlier, namely perception that there is a sufficient number of available others to whom one can turn, and the degree of satisfaction with the support perceived to be available, which are also under study here.

The Brief Social Support Questionnaire (BSSQ) was devised by Seigert, Patten and Walkey (1987), to replace the SSQ. The SSQ was developed and evaluated solely on college students so it was impractical to use for applied research within a community (Seigert et al, 1987). This 12-item scale is a brief version of the SSQ, being less than half as long as the full 54 item SSQ. The BSSQ offers a short version of the SSQ that possesses comparable psychometric characteristics, but is considerably more palatable to subjects less motivated to fill out the questionnaire (Seigert et al, 1987). For this reason, it was felt that the BSSQ was the better measure to be used in this study.

Procidano and Heller (1983) looked solely at the effect of perceived social support, and designed a measure (the PSS) that assessed the extent to which an individual perceives that his or her needs for support, information and feedback were fulfilled by friends (PSS-Fr) and family (PSS-Fa). They felt the distinction between friend and family support was important, as different populations may rely on or benefit from friend or family support to different extents. This may well be the case with gay women. As seen in the lifestyle section gay women tend to turn to friends and be more open with them than they do their family. This is another reason why the BSSQ measure was further divided to see the number of kin and non-kin in the social support perceived to be available.

PSS was found to be related to certain social network characteristics influenced by mood states. PSS was found to be negatively correlated with feelings of loneliness but was unrelated to the amount of social contact with others. The distinction between the PSS from family and friends also appeared to be important. Family networks were of longer duration and perception of family support seems to be stable and not influenced by temporary attitudinal changes. PSS-Fr, however, was lowered by negative mood states.

Various factors would appear to influence the perception of social support. Cutrona (1986) states that little is known about the determinants of the perception that one is receiving adequate social support. Her study looked at the network variables to explore whether the source of

potential would affect perceptions of support. Size of network could be viewed as important as the knowledge that many people are available in times of need would be expected to enhance a person's sense of support. A larger network would include a broader variety of people than smaller networks thus providing resources to cover a greater diversity of social needs. Also if one person is not available a large network could offer alternative sources of assistance.

Cutrona (1986) found the number of network members showed a strong relation to perceived social support. Another notable finding was the importance of kin versus non-kin sources of social support. Guidance, attachment, nuturance and reliable alliance (four of Weiss's six dimensions of social support seen in Chapter 3) were more strongly associated with kin whereas reassurance of worth and social integration were more strongly related to non-kin. This does not mean that one kind of relationship was actually more effective than another in supplying a particular need.

De Jong-Giervald and van Tilburg (1987) looked at the partner as a source of social support. When individuals were asked to whom they would turn for advice or help, a large majority of those living with a spouse, named that person. Individuals without a spouse generally identified a friend or family member as their first confidant. Their research showed that respondents' evaluations of support provided by their partners were inversely related to loneliness. The supportive quality of the partner relationship, as well as the availability of a partner, contributed to the alleviation of loneliness. It would also appear that non-partner and non-family type relationships, embracing a broader range of types of support, are needed in addition to partner relationships, to cope with life events and other serious problems.

Gender differences may be an important variable in social support. Stokes and Wilson (1984) point out that the stereotypic male may be reluctant to acknowledge difficulties or to ask others for help and guidance in solving problems. However, the stereotypic female is warm, expressive and comfortable with intimacy. She is more likely to acknowledge personal difficulties and seek help from others.

Past studies have shown that women have larger social networks, composed of similar others and perceive themselves as having more support than men. With regards to the type of support, women report receiving more emotional support, but no gender differences were found on the other types of social support ie cognitive guidance, material aid and socializing.

Although sex role orientation has been hypothesized to influence life stress adjustment, only three studies have been done looking at this issue. Roos and Cohen (1987), the more recent study, hypothesized that individuals who score higher on psychological masculinity will cope more effectively with recent life stress. This hypothesis was based on findings by Dezu et al (1986), quoted Roos and Cohen (1987), who found that high masculinity buffeted the effects of high recent life stress. This interaction was significant for both male and female subjects. Roos and Cohens' findings supported this hypothesis and also found that women, in comparison to men, scored higher on the measure of social support.

The findings that social support serves as a stress buffer for individuals with an internal/masculine personality style may have important implications in the sample of gay women since Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) found high masculinity scores in gay women.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of studies on gay women but few have looked at lesbian interaction, their lifestyles, values they share in their communities, and even fewer have examined the internal working of those communities and the importance they have in the lives of gay women.

Lockhard (1985) did examine this issue and found four features emerged as important in the definition of the gay womens' community. Firstly, the community consisted of social networks of lesbians who had a history of continued interaction. Networks were based on common interests and affection, and often were overlapping. The interaction of these networks led to the second feature of lesbian communities namely shared group identity.

The third feature was shared values and norms of the lesbian subculture. Subculture was defined as "a set of understandings, behaviours and artifacts used by particular groups and diffused through interlocking group networks" (Lockhard, 1985).

However, not all of the lesbian population is involved or identified in the lesbian community or subculture. The attitudes of outsiders and the stigma that is attached to lesbianism also affects the degree of individual identification and interaction with the community. Many women avoid socializing in the community or with other lesbians because of their fear of becoming identified as lesbian and losing their jobs and family.

The final feature of the lesbian community identified by Lockhard (1985), is its institutional base i.e. the gay defined places and organizations which characterize a community and provide a number of functions for the community members. Unless such a base is present, what

exists is more a social network of lesbians and not a community. A network suffers two major problems in comparison to a community, problems that can be solved if the institutional base exists. First, a network of friends depends on the participation of its individual members, without them the network ceases to exist. In a community however, if one institution fails, there are others to provide continuity. Secondly, potential new members have no access to a network unless they encounter a member under circumstances that would allow the shared identity to be revealed and an invitation to participation extended. This could be difficult in a network where women involved are closeted or if contact between them is infrequent.

This is not to deny the importance of social networks to lesbians. For lesbians in small towns, a network of friends may provide the only possible contact with other lesbians. Some gay women, because of their need to remain closeted, do not extend their social environments beyond their network of friends.

These findings of Lockhard's, may also apply to the gay women sample to be used in this study. Their involvement, or lack of, in the lesbian community may well be reflected in differences in social support variables between the two groups, or in loneliness associated with community type relationships.

As can be seen social support has been defined as input provided by another to help the target person with emotional issues, physical assistance, aid or cognitive guidance. The main aspects of social support are the perception that there are others available to whom one can turn and a degree of satisfaction with the support that is perceived.

However, again no studies have been done that compare the social support networks of heterosexual and homosexual women, the two groups that are under study here. Most studies located concentrated on the effect of social support and aspects of networks on loneliness. There was only one study found that looked at the lesbian community and social support networks. It is possible that a significant difference may be found between the two sample groups in perceived social support, with a possible connection to loneliness as Procidano & Hellar (1983) found a negative correlation between perceived social support and feelings of loneliness. This leads us to chapter 3.

Cutrona (1986) in her study points out the importance of kin versus non-kin. Because the two sample groups have been found to differ in their relationships with family and friends, we would expect a difference in the number of family the women turn to for support.

CHAPTER 3

LONELINESS

It is generally recognised that the phenomenon of loneliness is widespread in today's society. Several studies indicate that the percentage of subjects experiencing loneliness, most or all the time, ranges from 9 - 26% (Snodgrass, 1987).

Loneliness has been defined as "a state of emotional distress which arises from perceived deficiencies in one's interpersonal relationships" (Sadava & Matejcic, 1987). Sadava and Matejcic felt it was important to note that loneliness, a subjective state, is different to that of 'aloneness'. It is the unsatisfying quality of relationships and the interpretation of this state of affairs as being relatively permanent and personally caused, which is crucial to feeling lonely.

History of feelings in lonely people have shown that they are more likely to report little contact with parents during childhood, they had difficulty making friends in childhood, have low self esteem, and felt lonely in adolescence as well as adulthood. Some people who still felt lonely, even after settling down in a new job or house, tended to blame themselves and state they were looking for close relationships and not just company (Maxwell & Coebergh, 1986).

The loneliest periods for most people are when there were major life changes, for example, new jobs, new loves, when close relationships were lost through illness, breakups or friends moving away. Four important predictors of loneliness are how close the person is to the closest person in their lives, how many close friends they have and the amount of time they spend with these persons, how satisfied they are during their relationships, and whether they have contact with others during the day (Maxwell & Coebergh, 1986).

However a history of loneliness does not necessarily lead to loneliness in the present nor does a history of popularity prevent loneliness in the present. People appear to be vulnerable when major life changes occur or even more vulnerable if an important relationship breaks up.

There are several theories to explain loneliness. Weiss (1973) distinguishes between situational and characterological theories of loneliness. Situational theories emphasize deficits in the environment as causes of loneliness e.g. death of a spouse, moving to a new city, living in isolation. These are the more extreme examples, but it is also possible that the social

environment of the lonely is different from the non-lonely. There is some evidence that the social environment of the lonely is more restricted.

The alternative to the situational view of loneliness, is the approach that emphasizes individual differences. Research has identify a set of personality characteristics that are consistently linked to loneliness, namely low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and neurosis (Stokes, 1985).

There are four ways in which personality characteristics may contribute to loneliness, firstly, the characteristics may make the person an undesirable companion therefore they have less social relationships or secondly, individual differences might influence a person's interactional behaviour and make maintaining a relationship difficult. Thirdly, personality characteristics may affect one's reaction to actual changes in social relationships or finally, they may influence one's perceptions of the situation such as the degree in which one feels unsupported or uncared for(Stokes, 1985).

In summary, loneliness are the feelings an individual experiences when they undergo major life changes or they perceive deficiencies in interpersonal relationships, giving rise to feelings of unhappiness or of being alone.

A major hindrance to research on loneliness in the past has been the lack of a simple and reliable method of assessment. One problem is that loneliness, can not be readily manipulated by researchers. This led to the crucial task of developing an instrument to detect variations in loneliness that occur in everyday life.

Two scales have now gained recognition as reliable measures of loneliness - the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Ferguson, 1978) and the Differential Loneliness Scale (DLS) devised by Schmidt and Sermat (1983).

Schmidt and Sermat (1983) point out that the UCLA Loneliness Scale appears to be based on the assumption that loneliness is a unidimensional phenomenon with most items describing a lack of company or closeness with others. It was felt therefore that the scale may indicate deficiencies in interpersonal relationships but it does not provide information about the sources or the nature of the difficulty. Instead the scale assessed feelings of loneliness, often using the word lonely in the questions asked.

Schmidt and Sermat (1983) devised a new measure of loneliness - the Differential Loneliness Scale (DLS). The DLS is based on a conceptual model of loneliness and

identifies specific areas and dimensions of relationships
where loneliness may be experienced. In contrast to
other scales, the words "loneliness" and "lonely" are not
used, and the items are written in such a way as to
minimize any implications of personal inadequacies or
emotional problems in the person completing the scale.
The scale assesses the felt lack of, or dissatisfaction
with, certain types of social relationships that appear
to contribute to loneliness, and it explores some
qualitative aspects of such relationships. The
definition of loneliness, the DLS is based around, is
that of a subjectively felt discrepancy between the kinds
of relationships the individual perceives oneself as
having and what one would like to have. (Schmidt &
Sermat, 1983)

The DLS covers four types of relationships:
romantic/sexual, friendship, family, and relationships
with larger groups in the community. Any individual item
of the scale describes a particular type of interaction
and also refers to a specific kind of relationship.

The DLS was shown to be a valid and reliable measure.
The advantage of the DLS over the unidimensional scales
is that it tries to identify the specific areas in which
relational deficits occur, and the general consensus of
researchers on loneliness, is that loneliness is a
perception of relational deficit. The larger the number
of areas of relationships in which the deficit is
experienced at any one time, the greater the impact of
loneliness and the more difficult it is to overcome
(Schmidt & Sermat, 1983).

Various factors have been found to affect loneliness,
such as gender differences and social support.

Results on gender differences in loneliness have been
conflicting in past studies. In their article on the
validity of the UCLA Loneliness Scale, Russell, Peplau
and Cutrona (1986) claimed that research had shown no sex
differences in loneliness, yet Weiss (1973) presented
evidence showing that women are more apt to be lonely
than men. The differences between the two studies were
in the questions asked. The UCLA scale assessed
loneliness indirectly whereas Weiss directly questioned
the sample, asking them if they identified themselves as
lonely.

Borys and Perlman (1985) stated that nine of eleven
samples, where sex differences were evident, showed that
more women than men label themselves as lonely. This
does not mean that men are any less lonely, it is just
that women may be more willing to admit their loneliness
to themselves and others. The males become reluctant to
admit loneliness for fear of the possible repercussions
(Borys & Perlman, 1985).

The UCLA Loneliness scale and the DLS, as we have already discussed, focuses more on the quality of respondent's relationships. It has been found in research by Goldenberg and Perlman, quoted Borys and Perlman (1985), that men have less intimate, satisfying interpersonal bonds and this may be why men tend to score higher on the UCLA scale despite the fact that women are more likely to label themselves as lonely.

There are other reasons why a sex difference may be found in loneliness. Firstly, women may have lower self-esteem, which, as will be seen further on in this discussion, is associated with being lonely. Secondly, it is culturally more acceptable for women to express their difficulties than it is for men.

A third possibility is that women consider interpersonal relationships more important than men, thus deficiencies in their social relationships may be more unpleasant for them (Borys & Perlman, 1985).

Snodgrass (1987) studied loneliness in different types of relationships and intimacy. Three quarters of the women in the sample were married and romantic/sexual and friendship loneliness were identified more often than family or group/community loneliness (Snodgrass, 1987).

These findings were mirrored by Chamberlain and Zika (1988) who found that married women tended to score about equal for friends, romantic/sexual and community loneliness, with family being a lower source of loneliness.

Fourth, Wheeler, Reis and Nezlek, quoted by Shaber and Hazan (1987), found that loneliness is inversely related to spending time with females, a result that held for both sexes. From an attachment theory point of view, females can be considered sensitive and responsive and they felt it was not surprising that interactions with them reduced loneliness.

As can be seen in the discussion on loneliness, continual referrals are made to interpersonal relationship deficiencies as being the major cause of loneliness. Interpersonal relationships also play a significant part in social support networks, yet research on loneliness has evolved independently from this field, although a few studies are now becoming available that looks at loneliness and social support. Empirical evidence supports the high degree of association between loneliness and particular components of social support (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988).

As seen in Chapter 2, social support is defined as input provided by another to help the target person with

emotional issues, to provide physical assistance or material aid, or to impart cognitive guidance (Stokes & Wilson, 1984).

Jones and Moore (1987) looked at loneliness and social support using the Social Support Questionnaire, and the UCLA Loneliness Scale, as well as looking at the components of social networks such as the size and density. Loneliness was found to be related to several aspects of the participant's social support network. The results indicated an inverse relationship between the availability of social support and loneliness, both simultaneously and over time. In particular, satisfaction with the network, size and the proportion of the network who are important to one another (density) and who are perceived as being helpful, reciprocating the relationship, serving as confidants and friends, are most strongly related to loneliness. The regression analysis indicated that although network size is less predictive of loneliness, when both are assessed simultaneously over time, network size assumes a more important role. This finding may help to explain why quantitative measures of social support and relationships have been found to be inconsistently related to loneliness in other research (Jones & Moore, 1987).

Three implications were proposed from the findings of Jones and Moore (1987). First, although loneliness and social support are related, the study indicated they were not identical constructs and therefore it may be useful to study them separately. Secondly, the study provided little evidence to conclude that the relative lack of social support caused loneliness exclusively or even primarily. It may be that loneliness and social support are two related but independent phenomenon, or loneliness and social support are mutual determinants with increases in loneliness interfering with the maintenance of existing supportive networks, or development of new supportive relationships and reduction in social support resulting in increased loneliness.

Third, the context in which social support is received may be an important variable to assess in future studies of loneliness. Finally these results raise questions regarding the extent in which loneliness is embedded in habitual behaviours and internal processes of the lonely person. Hence it may be useful to assess the people within the network as well as the lonely person. In this way you would be able to determine whether the lack of social support consistently reported by lonely persons is because there actually is lower levels of support and fewer supportive relationships with others or because the lonely person tends to underestimate and undervalue the support he or she receives when feeling lonely.

Weiss (1974), quoted Sarason et al (1983) and Cutrona

(1986), has described six dimensions of social support that he feels is needed for individuals to feel adequately supported and to avoid loneliness. The six dimensions were:

a. Intimacy: the sense of emotional closeness and security provided by a spouse or lover.

b. Social Integration: sense of belonging to a group of people who share common interests and recreational activities, usually provided by a friend.

c. Nuturance: a sense of responsibility for the well-being of another, usually from ones children.

d. Worth: acknowledgement of ones competence and skill, usually obtained form co-workers.

e. Alliance: assurance that one can count of others for assistance under any circumstances, usually family, and

f. Guidance: advice and information usually obtained from teachers, mentors or parents.

Schmidt and Sermat (1983), quote Wood (1976), who did a study into the influence of different kinds of relationships and showed that intimate, personal and primacy relationships are more crucial to the prevention of loneliness than are secondary group ties, professional success or status in the community.

Chamberlain and Zika (1988) say findings of studies suggest that involvement with friends has a more consistent positive effect on well-being than involvement with family members. Schmidt and Sermat (1983) found the highest correlations on the Differential Loneliness Scale (DLS) and self-reported loneliness to be for the category of friendship relations. They suggest that the existence of satisfactory friendships is perhaps a good measure of a person's ability to relate to others in a rewarding and mutually satisfying manner than is the case with romantic/sexual, family or group relationships. Romantic/sexual relationships tend to be subject to frequent changes of mood which may be intense when they occur, but do not have the same lasting quality that is found in friendships. Breakdown of a friendship was very infrequently mentioned as a cause for loneliness but friends were the first person the lonely person turned to.

Rook (1987) completed five studies which contrasted the role of companionship and social support in buffering life stress, in influencing feelings of loneliness and social satisfaction, and in eliciting unfavorable

judgements from others.

The term companionship in this article referred to shared leisure and other activities that are undertaken for the intrinsic goal of enjoyment, and social support was not perceived support but interpersonal transactions in which problem focused aid was exchanged. Rook (1987) stated that support protects people from the adverse effects of stress, whereas companionship protects people from the emptiness and despair associated with loneliness.

Rook's findings (1987) suggested that companionship was more important than emotional or instrumental support in producing greater satisfaction with friends and feeling less lonely.

The final study extended the comparison of companionship and social support by recognising that people whose relationships are deficient in these two areas may differ not only in the kind of interpersonal exchanges available to them, but also in the kind of reaction they elicit from others. Rook (1987) pointed out in the study that the ratings of relationship satisfaction and perceived loneliness indicate that deficits of companionship and of emotional support were viewed as equally distressing to the stimulus person. It is possible that negative reactions to those whose social relationships are deficient are conveyed in some fashion and that public visibility of some kinds of interpersonal deficits may compound this problem of distress by the focal person. This may have important implications for gay women as the public visibility of this type of relationship is not readily accepted.

Relationships that people maintain with others are of major importance for personal well-being and prevention of loneliness. The content and quality of the relationships, as perceived by the individual involved, have been shown to have greater significance than the size and composition of the social network (de Jong-Giervald & van Tilburg, 1987).

In conclusion, lonely persons report smaller and less satisfying interpersonal networks i.e. fewer friends and companions, and that they less frequently engage in social and heterosocial activities. Yet it appears that measures of satisfaction of social and intimate relationships are better predictors of loneliness than are the size of the network or frequency or type of social contact. It is still not clear to what extent available relationships and social ties determine the degree of loneliness.

As already mentioned, this study is interested in comparing two groups, namely heterosexual and homosexual women, in social support and loneliness, with differences

possibly explained by differences in the lifestyles of
the two groups.

The DLS is beneficial in assessing loneliness between the
two groups of women as it looks at different relationship
areas. We may find general differences in these
relationship areas due to their different lifestyles and
sexual orientations scores, which may be reflected in the
scores they obtain on the four subscales of the DLS.

Snodgrass (1987) and Chamberlain and Zika (1988) found
married women scored low in loneliness values for the
family area, with romantic/sexual and friendship areas
being higher. As was seen in the social support and
lifestyle sections, gay women tend to turn to friends and
be more open with them than they do with their family.
For this reason we may expect gay women to score higher
on the family loneliness and lower on the friendship
section.

Another reason we may expect lower scores on friendship
loneliness, and possibly romantic/sexual loneliness in
gay women, is because Shaver and Hazan (1987) found that
loneliness was reduced by spending time with females.
Gay women spend most of their time in the presence of
women, as was researched by Albro and Tulley (1979).
They found that 80.2% lived in households without men.
Albro and Tulley (1979) also found that 83.5% of their
sample of gay women at the time of the study, were
involved in a lover relationship.

Borys and Perlman (1985) state evidence that men have
less intimate, satisfying interpersonal bonds and
therefore the bond between husband and wife may not be as
satisfying or as intimate as that between two women.
This may be reflected by a difference between the two
groups in romantic sexual loneliness scores.

Gay women can also be part of a close knit community
since, within the gay community they do not need to hide
their true identity, and activities are organised where
they can get together with other gay women. For this
reason we may find a lower group/community loneliness
score for gay women.

In summary the present investigation seeks to explore
three areas where we hope to find differences between gay
and heterosexual women, - loneliness and social support,
with differences possibly being explained by differences
in lifestyle.

Loneliness is measured using the DLS, social support
using the Brief social support questionnaire and
perceived social support using the PSSFr and PSSFa
scales, and lifestyle, using questions made up from
research findings mentioned in this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

The data reported in this study was obtained from
quantitative measures, looking at loneliness, social
support and lifestyle. The research was of cross-
sectional design, using identical measures for both
groups. Data was collected from two different samples -
heterosexual and homosexual women, and was analyzed using
the statistical package SPSS-PC.

Subjects

Heterosexual Women - these women were classified as 1 on
the Kingsey Scale of Sexual Orientation i.e. exclusively
heterosexual. There were 87 women in this group, the
mean age being 30.74 years (SD = 9.6 yr). Only 7 (8%)
lived alone with 43 (49%) living with partners or
husbands, 20 (23%) in a flatting situation and 9 (10%) at
home. Less than half were married (N = 34, 39%) with 8
(9%) having been separated or divorced and 27 (31%)
classifying themselves as single. Forty seven (55%) of
the group had no children, and the maximum number of
children in a family was 4. Thirty (34%) had some form of
tertiary education and a further 48% (N = 42) had some
form of secondary schooling.

Homosexual Women - these women classified themselves as 6
on the Kingsey Scale of Sexual Orientation i.e.
exclusively homosexual. There was 63 women in this
group, the mean age being 32.31 yrs (SD = 6.5 yrs).
Twelve other respondents classified themselves as mixed
(heterosexual/homosexual) sexual orientation and were not
included in the study. None of the sample lived with a
male flatmate/boarder, only one lived at home (1.6%) with
31 (49%) living with their partner, 1 (1.6%) still lived
with her husband and 20 (32%) lived in a flatting
situation. Six (9.5%) were separated or divorced and 12
(19%) classified themselves as single. Ten (16%) of the
group had children, ranging in number from 1 to 4.
Twenty eight (44%) had some form of tertiary education
and 38% (N = 24) had some form of secondary schooling.

Measures

Loneliness - Schmidt & Sermat's (1983) Differential
Loneliness Scale was used to measure loneliness. This
scale is made up of 60 statements to which respondents
answer true or false. The scale looks at loneliness in
four different relationship areas, namely family, friend,
romantic and community. The scale is reported to have
high internal consistency (KR-20 coefficients ranging

from .90 to .92) and strong concurrent, discriminant and structural validity (Schmidt & Sermat, 1983).

<u>Social Support</u> - Two scales were used to measure social support. Firstly was the Perceived Social Support scales of Procidano & Hellar (1983), looking at family and friends. The two subscales are made up of 20 identical statements, the only difference being the word family was used for the family scale and the word friends was used in the friends scale. The respondents answered yes or no to the statements. The PSS measures were found to be internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha of .88 and .90 for PSSFr and PSSFa respectively) and appeared to measure valid constructs that were separate from each other and from network measures (Procidano & Hellar, 1983).

The second scale used was the Brief Social Support Questionnaire (BSSQ) devised by Seigert, Patten & Walkey (1987). This 12-item scale is a brief version of the SSQ, being less than half as long as the full 54 item SSQ. The BSSQ possesses comparable psychometric characteristics, but is considerably more palatable to subjects less motivated to fill out the questionnaire (Seigert et al, 1987). The respondents were instructed to supply initials of supporters for each question. In addition the subjects were asked to note in brackets their relationship with that supporter. They then rated their level of satisfaction with the total support for that situation, along a six point continuum from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. The two subscales of the BSSQ were both highly reliable, with reliability coefficients of .91 and .94 for the network size and satisfaction respectively (Seigert et al, 1987).

<u>Lifestyle</u> - there were two sets of questions. The first set was for women with and without partners, regardless of their sexual orientation. These questions dealt with two areas of lifestyle, namely relationships and attitudes. Relationship questions looked at how long the respondent had been in or out of the relationship, how many relationships they had been in, major reasons for the relationship to break up, sharing of power and bills, joint accounts, and how they met. Questions on attitude asked what the respondent's concept of the woman's role was, how important their independence was, if they believed in sexual relations outside of a relationship. All questions were based on the findings of Albro and Tulley's study (1979). The set of questions have not been used elsewhere in research as a lifestyle measure so at present the internal consistency and reliability is unknown.

The second set of questions were for lesbians only, and they dealt with aspects of openness, isolation from society, how they presented themselves in public, and the

responses of people knowing about their lesbianism. The openness and isolation question came from Albro and Tulley's study (1979). The rest of the questions came from the Jay and Young Gay Report (1979).

Procedure

Women were recruited through friends using a snowball technique. If a woman, initially known to the researcher, was able to be interviewed at work, then permission was gained for the researcher to wander through the building to find other women to complete the questionnaire. Past work contacts were also used to gain access to areas where women were not initially known to the researcher. This worked for both groups. However, to find more gay women, those participating in the research would supply names and phone numbers of others who would be a good contact source.

The initial contact with each women involved giving the purpose of the research and outlining the questionnaire sections. All women chose to complete the questionnaire away from the researcher. The second contact with the women involved picking up the questionnaire and checking on any problem areas they may have encountered.

The questionnaire took approximately 40 minutes to complete.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The aim of the analysis was to compare two groups of
women, namely heterosexual and homosexual women, to test
for differences in loneliness, social support networks
and lifestyle variables. SPSS-PC was used to analyze the
data to look these differences between the two groups
under study. Before analysis began missing variables
were coded. In general no cases were dropped if missing
values were present. This only happened when total
scores were computed. The total scores for the four
relationship areas of the DLS were calculated for each
respondent. If there were three missing values for any
one case then the case was dropped. This procedure was
also used for the two perceived social support scales and
the four subscales of the Brief social support
questionnaire. The t-test was then used to compare the
means of the total scores for the two sample groups.

For the lifestyle section, frequencies were calculated
for all questions. Means and standard deviations were
also calculated for age. For frequencies that show a
large difference between the two sample groups, a chi-
squared test was applied to test for significance.

Lifestyle - Data was first examined for differences in
lifestyle scores between the two groups. The variables
can be divided into two of the areas of lifestyle
discussed in the introduction, attitudes and
relationships.

Lifestyle variables show some differences in frequencies
between the two research groups, and some similarities.

Attitudes were compared for the concept of the woman's
role and how important the respondent's independence was
to them. Slightly more gay women felt their independence
was very important, 69.4% (43) compared to 59.3%
heterosexual women (51). Of the heterosexual women 84.9%
felt their importance was fairly to very important with
87.1% of the gay women feeling the same way. One (1.6%)
gay woman felt her independence was never important.
These results were not significantly different ($\chi^2 =$
1.8224, df = 3).

The women were asked to note down what they felt 'their
concept of the woman's role' was. Twenty nine (39.7%) of
the heterosexual group talked about equality, with 24.7%
(18) feeling that the woman's place is in the home,
looking after the family. On the other hand some of the
gay women felt there should not be a concept (16.9%, n =
10), while 45.8% (27) mentioned equality or the gender

neutral concept. Only one (1.7%) mentioned that the woman's place was in the home. This particular respondent had young children who were not able to live with her. These differences in scores proved to be significant (χ^2 = 28.281, df = 6, p<0.001).

In general no clear distinction can be made in attitudes concerning independence. However there is a clear difference in the women's attitudes towards the concept of the woman's role.

The rest of the lifestyle questions dealt with relationships and concepts within relationships. Gay women tended to enter more relationships, the mean being 4.03 (SD = 3.63), compared to a mean of 2.81 (SD = 4.37) for heterosexual women. The difference between the two means proved to be not significant however. (t = -1.70, df = 131).

Reasons for relationship breakup varied from independence to bored, dissatisfied, having moved, and too young. Independence seemed to occur more for relationship breakup in the heterosexual group, 15.1% (11) scoring in this category, with only 1 gay woman (1.7%) doing likewise. The causes of breakups for the two groups are significantly different (χ^2 = 17.7153, df = 6, p<0.01).

For those that answered that their partner had not been faithful, 26.7% (16) were gay women and 6.8% (5) were heterosexual. However this trend was not seen in the question concerning sexual relations outside of the relationship. Fifty two (82.5%) gay women did not believe in sexual relations outside of the relationship which was a similar percentage to the heterosexual group (84.9%, n = 73), (χ^2 = 0.7332, df = 2).

Both groups seemed to want to maintain their living conditions with 74.7% (65) heterosexual and 70.5% (43) gay women scoring to this effect (χ^2 = 0.6448, df = 1).

Both heterosexual and gay women seemed to do most of their socializing with their partner (χ^2 = 1.7979, df =2). However when asked if they saw their relationship as permanent 33.9% (21) of the gay women were not sure, compared with only 17.4% (15) for the heterosexual women (χ^2 = 8.6937, df = 2, p<0.05).

One question dealt with shared assets. In most cases only a small proportion of the gay women shared ownership of different assets such as joint bank accounts. Sixteen (26.7%) had joint bank accounts, 30% (18) had joint loans, 20.3% (12) had joint ownership in a motor vehicle, and 36.7% (22) had property. In comparison 61.9% (52) of the heterosexual women had joint bank accounts (χ^2 = 17.3444, df = 1, p<0.005), 62% (42) had joint loans (χ^2 = 13.9617, df = 1, p<0.005), 56.8% (46) half-owned a motor

vehicle (χ^2 = 18,5656, df = 1, p<0.005) and 66.3% (55) had property (χ^2 = 11.9616, df = 1, p<0.005).

When asked how the women met their present or last partner, just under half of the heterosexual women (42.2%, n = 35), meet their partner through work or training courses. Only 11.1% (7) of the lesbian group met their partner in this way with a large proportion saying they met their partner through friends, the lesbian community or socially (82.5%, n = 52). Only 22.2% gay women specified lesbian community but it is possible that 'socially' could include gay clubs and 'through friends' could include other gay women that the respondents did not specifically identify. In comparison 53% (44) heterosexual women met their partner either through friends or socially (χ^2= 12.1641, df = 5, p<0.05).

There was no difference between the two groups when it came to sharing the rent (χ^2 = 0.0014, df = 1), bills (χ^2 = 0.008, df = 1), and equality of power (χ^2 = 0.5155, df = 1). The majority of both groups indicated they had equal shares. The main reason that respondents answered they were not sharing was because they owned their own home, or the partner or themselves were unemployed and so they were not able to contribute financially as much as they would have liked.

The majority of the heterosexual sample (90.6%) said they found it very or fairly easy to discuss problems with their partner. The gay women felt a little less able to discuss their problems so easily (79.4%) with 12.7% (8) saying that it was not so easy to discuss problems with their partner (χ^2 = 12.4798, df = 4, p<0.025).

Conclusions drawn from the data concerning relationships, suggests that both groups believe in being monogamous, and enjoy socializing with their partner. Both groups are also happy with their present living conditions and have equality in all aspects of the household. Differences in data show that gay couples break up for different reasons and they do not share ownership of assets when in a committed relationship, while heterosexual women tended to meet their partners through different avenues and find it easier to discuss problems with them.

The lifestyle area of living arrangements was measured in the demographic section of the main questionnaire and previously discussed in the method section. Conclusions drawn from these results are none of the gay women lived in households with men, and very few of the gay women lived at home. A small proportion of the gay women were separated or divorced , having had children in their marriage. A high percentage of these children did not live with their mothers.

The gay women answered a separate set of questions concerning their lesbianism. The first few questions dealt with age of their first lesbian experience, how long they had been a lesbian and at what age did they first tell someone about their lesbianism, other than their partner.

The youngest that a woman had her first lesbian experience was 6 years old, with the oldest being 39 (mean = 22.4 years, SD = 11.8 years). However the youngest age that a woman told someone of their lesbianism was 12 years, the oldest being 39 years, with a mean of 24.8 years (SD = 15 years).

One respondent has been a practicing lesbian for only three months, with the longest time being 36 years, giving a mean of 12 years (SD = 15 years).

Some questions asked the respondents how open they are with their lesbianism. Twenty two (34%) said they were completely open and honest about their sexual orientation with 12.7% (n = 8) saying that they keep their sexual orientation hidden with few exceptions. Of those who keep their sexual orientation hidden, 6 (9.5%) present themselves as heterosexual at work and in public quite a lot of the time. Over half of all respondents (55.6%, n = 35) said they never present themselves as heterosexual at work or in public.

When asked what they believed would be the outcome if their place of employment found out about their lesbianism, 60.3% (n = 38) felt there would be no problem, whereas 27% (n = 17) felt it would affect promotion or even lead to dismissal. It is possible that the women who felt it would not be a problem said this because their employers already knew about their lesbianism. Only fifteen of the respondents (23.8%) said their bosses did not know. For those that do know, 33.3% (n = 21) gave a neutral response, while 4.8% (n = 3) where somewhat negative. Of the co-workers, over half of the gay women (57.1%, n = 36) said most or all of them knew, with the reaction being mainly positive.

Some of the women (23.8%, n = 15) felt isolated from society, with a larger number (39.7%, n = 25) feeling that society's acceptance of their lesbianism was important. With regard to the lesbian community, over half (52.4%, n = 33) felt that the concepts of the lesbian community and culture was somewhat or very important to them.

The women were asked who knew about their lesbianism and the reaction of these people to that fact. All or most of their lesbian friends knew and they reacted positively to this knowledge. Of the heterosexual friends 71.4% (n

= 45) said that most or all of them knew, with 20.6% (n = 13) saying only some knew. The reaction of these friends ranged from neutral to positive. Only one woman said she had received a negative response.

In the family sphere, more mothers knew (76.2%, n = 48) of their daughters sexual orientation, than fathers (47.6%, n = 30). The reaction has been mixed. Twenty women (31.7%) said their mothers reacted negatively, 22.2% (n = 14) a neutral reaction. Eleven (17.5%) fathers reacted negatively and an equal number gave a neutral response. Most of the siblings have been told (71.4%, n = 45) with only a small number reacting negatively (7.9%, n = 5). For those with children, none reacted negatively to the news.

Finally the women were asked if they had experienced such things as arrest, blackmail, job loss, harassment and so on, connected with their lesbianism. Fear of discovery was something that 36.5% (n = 23) had felt at some time. More women had experienced harassment (46%, n = 29) and verbal abuse. Seventeen (26.9%) said they had also experienced physical abuse. Six women (9.6%) believed that they had lost a job and forced to move because of their lesbianism, and nine (14.4%) said they had been blackmailed at least once.

In summary, the gay women in this study are fairly open about their lesbianism with only a small number feeling they need to present themselves a heterosexual in the public. Quite a few people know of their lesbianism, ranging from family to friends and workmates, with reactions being mainly positive from friends and workmates, and mixed from the family. Only a small number of the group thought the knowledge of their lesbianism would affect their jobs.

With regard to the general society, only a small number felt isolated from it, and felt that society's acceptance of their lesbianism was important. Over half felt the concepts of the lesbian community and culture was important to them. Fear of discovery was something that some of the women had felt at some time, while some had experienced harassment, verbal and physical abuse.

Loneliness - Because of lifestyle differences it was thought that gay women would be more lonely for family and less lonely for friends as compared to heterosexual women. To test this prediction a t-test was applied to the loneliness scores the results of which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1:

Means, Standard Deviations and t values on
Differential Loneliness Dimensions for Gay and
Heterosexual Women.

	Gay Women		Heterosexual Women		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Area of Loneliness					
Family	5.53	5.06	2.41	3.87	-4.27 **
Friend	2.78	2.85	2.59	3.14	-0.38
Romantic	2.41	3.30	2.54	3.42	0.22
Community	1.87	1.65	1.35	1.45	-2.07 *

(** p < 0.001, * p < 0.05)

As can be seen, there is a significant difference between
the two groups for family loneliness scores (df = 148, p
< 0.001), and community loneliness (df = 148, p < 0.05)
with the gay womens' scores indicating that they are more
lonely in these two relationship areas.

Social Support - It was argued in the social support
section that the two groups of women may have differences
in their social support network with regards to the
number of family and friends. To test the expectation
that gay women would perceive less social support form
the family and more from friends, a t-test was carried
out on the two perceived social support scales. The
results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2:

Means, Standard Deviations and t values on Perceived
Social Support Values for Gay and Heterosexual Women.

| | Gay Women | | Heterosexual Women | | t |
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
PSS for family	10.79	6.16	15.36	5.16	4.92 **
PSS for friends	15.64	4.06	15.22	3.82	-0.64

(** p < 0.001)

Again we can see a significant difference between the two
groups, with the gay women perceiving less support from
the family (df = 148, p<0.001).

Correlations between the scores on the perceived social
support scales and the differential loneliness scale for
the areas of family and friends were calculated. This
was to test Procidano and Heller (1983) finding of a
negative correlation between perceived social support and
loneliness. The correlation between perceived family
support and family loneliness was -0.7738, (p<0.001).
The correlation coefficient for perceived support from
friends and loneliness for friendship was -0.5837, (p<
0.001). These two results indicate a negative
relationship between loneliness and perceived social
support.

The Brief Social Support Questionnaire looks at total
available support for 12 different problems, as well as
how satisfied the respondent is with the total support
available. I further divided the support available into
how many were family or kin and how many were friends or
non-kin. In Stokes and Wilson's (1984) research this is
referred to as the density of the support network.

A t-test was carried out to see if a difference could be
found between the two groups in the total amount and type
of support they receive. Table 3 shows the results of
the analysis.

Table 3:

Mean, Standard Deviation and t value on the BSSQ
Variables for Gay and Heterosexual Women.

	Gay Women		Heterosexual Women		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Total Support	48.75	30.10	50.70	29.14	0.40
Kin Support	17.43	15.04	26.23	16.86	3.30 **
Non-kin support	25.79	22.39	19.69	17.23	-1.89
Satisfaction	57.94	18.24	59.01	21.05	0.33

(** p < 0.001)

Results in Table 3 show that despite the total support
being similar, there is a significant difference in the
number of kin or family members in the support network,
but not so for non-kin. Heterosexual women have a
significantly higher number of family members on which
they can rely for support in different situations (df =
148, p < 0.001).

There was no significant difference in satisfaction in
the type of support each group received, despite the
earlier findings that the two groups of women rely on
different sources of support, namely family for
heterosexual women and friends for gay women.

In summary, findings indicate that gay women perceive
less support from the family, had less family in the
social support network, yet had a similar network size
and was equally satisfied as the heterosexual women at
the support they received.

Next a multiple regression analysis was applied to the
areas of loneliness with family or friends since these
two relationship areas are important variables in
perceiving differences in social support between the two
sample groups. Loneliness for the community was also
included in the analysis because the groups were found to
be significantly different in this area.

To determine what aspects of lifestyle and social support were best predictors of family loneliness for heterosexual women, we entered total support from kin and non-kin on the BSSQ, total perceived support from family and friends, and if the respondent had a partner on the same step of a multiple regression analysis. Only perceived support from family contributed significantly to the prediction of family loneliness (R squared = .391, Beta = -.604, t = -6.03, p<0.001). This variable alone accounted for 39.1% of the variation in family loneliness. In comparison the same variables were entered for gay women and again perceived support from the family proved to be the best predictor (R squared = 0.75, Beta = -0.881, t = -10.853, p<0.001). However this variable is a stronger predictor of loneliness in gay women accounting for 75% of the variance, which may mean gay women place more importance on the family.

In another multiple regression analysis, the same variables as above were used for the gay women, plus some of the variables from the questionnaire concerning their lesbianism, to see if their were any other variables due to their sexual orientation that would predict family loneliness. The extra variables were age they came out, how long they had been a practicing lesbian, if their mother, father and own children knew about their lesbianism and how they reacted to this knowledge. Two variables proved to contribute to family loneliness (R squared = 0.833). These were perceived support from family (Beta = -0.825, t = -9.305, p<0.001), and the children knowing (Beta = 0.286, t = 2.21, p<0.05). Again, perceived family support accounted for a large amount of the variance. However gay women have an extra variable that predicted family loneliness, this being their children knowing of their sexual orientation.

To determine what aspects of lifestyle and social support were best predictors of loneliness in the relationship area of friends, we entered the variables of kin and non-kin support, perceived support for friends and family, and partner, for heterosexual women and again for gay women. For the gay women we did another analysis entering these variables plus friends and coworkers knowing about their lesbianism and their reaction to that knowledge.

Only one variable contributed significantly to the prediction of this area of loneliness for heterosexual women, this being perceived support from friends (Beta = -5.26, t = -4.89, p<0.001, R squared = 0.284). There were two variables that proved to be significant for the gay women, namely perceived support from friends (Beta = - 0.595, t = -5.80, p<0.001) and total number of non-kin in their support network (Beta = -0.285, t = -2.644, p<0.05). Together these two variables contributed 53.7% of the variation in loneliness for friends. In the third

analysis taking into account variables owing to their lesbianism, no new variables proved to significantly predict loneliness in the relationship area of friends, only the two found above proved to be the best predictors, accounting for 53.7% of the variance. As was the case in predicting family loneliness, the variables for the gay women are stronger predictors than those of heterosexual women, and it would appear that the number of friends in the gay woman's social support network has some bearing on loneliness in the relationship area of friends.

Gay women proved to be lonely in the area of groups as seen earlier. To see what aspects of lifestyle and social support best predicted group loneliness for these women, we entered the following variables - acceptance in society, feeling isolated in society, importance of the lesbian community and involvement in lesbian, women only, gay, mixed and heterosexual environments, whether they presented themselves as heterosexual, how open their were about their sexuality and if they had ever experienced verbal abuse. Feeling isolated in society (R squared = 0.307)Beta = 0.383, t = 2.269, p<0.05) proved to the best predictor of group loneliness, accounting for 30.7% of the variance.

In summary the multiple regression results suggest that, for both groups, the perceived support from family or friends is the best predictor of loneliness in that particular relationship area. Gay women have additional variables that can predict loneliness in different areas due to their sexual orientation. In the relationship area of family it is their children knowing of their lesbianism, in the area of friends it is the number of non-kin or friends they have in their support network and for group loneliness it is the feeling that they are isolated from the society.

CHAPTER   6

DISCUSSION

Social Support

Considered together the findings of the two perceived
social support scales and the Brief Social Support
Questionnaire suggest that friends are the main form of
support for the gay women and family for the heterosexual
women. Total amount of support and the degree of
satisfaction of the overall support were no different
between the two groups.

The PSS measures described in this report were used to
measure the extent to which an individual perceives that
his/her needs for support, information and feedback are
fulfilled by friends and family. The distinction between
friend support and family support was considered
important as Procidano and Heller (1983) stated that
different populations may rely on or benefit from friend
or family support to different extents, as was believed
to be the case with gay and heterosexual women. This
notion has been confirmed by the results in this study.

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) also found that lesbian
partners perceived less social support from the family
than did married partners. Because married and
cohabiting partners did not differ in social support from
the family, it was felt that the social stigma associated
with homosexuality may be greater than that associated
with cohabiting without marriage. It is also possible
that homosexual couples may be selective about whom they
disclose the mature of their relationship, therefore
their social support system may be more restricted than
those of heterosexual couples. Also, because homosexual
couples may disclose themselves more to friends than
family, friends may function as a stronger social support
system than family.

All perceived social support variables are subjective in
nature and modified by memory effects (Oritt, et al,
1985). It is the interpretation of the impact of the
past events that is presumed to play a crucial role in
determining the current perceptions of social support.
Since the family did not react well to the knowledge of
their daughter's lesbianism (only 30% of the mothers and
17.4% of the fathers reacted positively) the impact of
this has affected how they perceive the support they
receive from them.

Perceived social support was found to be negatively
correlated with feeling of loneliness by Procidano &
Heller, in 1983. This study confirmed this finding in

that gay women perceived less social support from the family than heterosexual women, and at the same time were more lonely for the family.

The findings of the BSSQ in the present study showed a significant difference in the number of kin the two groups of women rely on for support. Heterosexual women had more family members in their network than gay women. Kin and non-kin are important sources of social support. Guidance, attachment, nuturance and reliable alliance were more strongly associated with kin whereas reassurance of worth and social integration were more strongly related to non-kin. In the gay women it may well be that the need for reassurance of worth and social integration is more important to them to feel accepted than what the family has to offer.

Rook (1987) suggest that friendships and family relationships differ in the nature and in the kinds of functions they perform most easily. Peer relations are usually voluntary, arising from mutual interests and social needs. Family relations however, are non-voluntary and are more likely to be sustained by feeling of obligation than be shared interests. Such differences appear to make kin ties more suited to practical aid but less so to satisfying friendship needs. This may mean that gay women have a stronger friendship need than a family need to feel they belong in society, and to gain acceptance. This may be reflected by the study's findings that gay women perceived more support from friends and have a larger number of friends in their support network, than family members.

Satisfaction with support is viewed as the personal gratification resulting from the perceived effectiveness of the network member's support in reducing stress and restoring emotional and instrumental equilibrium (Sarason et al, 1983). No difference was found in satisfaction of the network between the two groups. This may mean that despite the differences in the content of the networks, the women are equally gratified by the support received.

Loneliness

The results of this section of the study suggests that, as predicted, gay women are more lonely than heterosexual women in the relationship area of family. The finding is consistent with the evidence offered by Albro and Tulley (1979).

Sadava and Matejcic (1987) state that loneliness of an individual is clearly related to a perceived deficiency in communication with relationships. Communication is the key work in this instance. In this study, 76.2% (N = 48) had told their mothers with less than half having told their father. However, of the mothers, only 30% (N

= 19) reacted positively the outcome of which could well be strained relations with them. It is difficult to know whether an untapped source of emotional support for the gay women exists within the family, especially parents, since so few tell them about their lesbianism and look to them for support.

We also predicted that if gay women were more lonely in the area of family, they would be less lonely for friends. We did not have evidence however to suggest this was the case. Heterosexual women were no less lonely in the area of friends. This was not the case in Snodgrass's study (1987). She found that 75% of her sample were married and that romantic/sexual and friendship loneliness were identified more often than family or group loneliness.

It is possible that gay women may have more friends than heterosexual women, but the two groups are no less lonely, because of the type of support offered is equally satisfying. This has been reflected in the social support results, satisfaction scores of the BSSQ. As seen earlier, Procidano and Heller (1983) found that perceived social support and satisfaction were a better predictor of loneliness than social network characteristics such as size, number of people one feels close to, number of kin and density.

Gay women were also found to be lonely in the relationship area of group/community. No specific predictions were made in this area before the commencement of the study. Lockhard (1985) found features important in the gay community, these being shared group identity, shared norms and values, institutional bases and history of continual interaction. However she points out that not all of the lesbian population is involved or identified in the lesbian community or subculture. The attitudes of outsiders and the stigma that is attached to lesbianism also affects the degree of individual identification and interaction with the community. Many women avoid socializing in the community or with other lesbians because of their fear of becoming identified as lesbian and losing their jobs and family.

A number of interpretations of our results seems possible. Firstly, the sample of gay women in this sample may not be very open about their sexuality therefore not particularly active in the gay community. This is not supported by the lifestyle results looking at openness, as only 23.8% (N = 15) claimed not being very open about their lesbianism.

Secondly, the women may be actively involved in the gay community but not involved in any other groups or organizations within the heterosexual

community, and took the questions in the DLS to mean this.

Thirdly, the gay women in the sample may feel isolated from the heterosexual society and feel that society's acceptance of them is important. This is reflected by feeling lonely in the area of community. Lifestyle scores show that less than half of the sample feel society's acceptance of them is not important. However only 23.8% (N = 15), the same number as those not open about their sexuality, feel isolated from society. This notion was supported by the multiple regression results in that they showed that the best predictor of group loneliness was feelings of isolation from society, which accounted for 30.7% of the variance in group loneliness.

Another possibility is that the lesbian community is not offering what the women need or want, so they are not actively involved in it. Instead, most socializing may take place at parties and dinners with friends. A similar pattern was observed by Lockhard (1985) who went on to say that groups of friends, united by their common interests and mutual affection composed the internal structure of the community. Women however may not see this as a community.

No significant differences were found in the area of romantic/sexual loneliness. This suggests that there is no difference in relationship quality or satisfaction between lesbian couples and heterosexual couples, in this study. This is consistent with findings from Kurdek and Schmitt's (1986) research into relationship quality of partners in heterosexual married and cohabiting partners, and gay and lesbian relationships, and also supports the idea that the gay women in this sample had chosen dyadic attachment in their relationships. Dyadic attachment is concerned with establishing emotionally close and relatively secure love relationships, just as most heterosexual women do.

The multiple regression analysis findings indicated that perceived social support for the family is the best predictor for family loneliness in both groups. The gay women had other variables that predicted family loneliness that stemmed from their lesbianism. Surprisingly it was only the children knowing that contributed significantly to predicting family loneliness. The mother and father knowing had no effect yet they were the ones most likely to react negatively to the knowledge of their daughter's sexual orientation. Unfortunately no research has been done on predicting loneliness in gay women so there are no evidence to support this studies findings. In heterosexual women, Chamberlain and Zika (1988) found that hassles was a significant predictor of all dimensions of loneliness, as was purpose in life. However these variables were not

used in this study.

The prediction of loneliness for friends in heterosexual
women, was at best a weak one. The reason for this may
well be that these women were not found to be lonely in
this area on the DLS. The combined variables for the gay
women were better predictors.

The multiple regression analysis results for group
loneliness in gay women suggests that they are lonely for
the general society, not for their own as was offered as
a possible explanation for the loneliness score on the
DLS. The variable that was a significant predictor was
how isolated they felt from the general society.

<u>Lifestyle</u>

Lynch and Reilly (1986) researched lesbian relationships
to look at the extent of equality and role-playing. They
found that 40% of the individuals in the study reported
an equal sharing of responsibility for chores. The
majority of relationships were characterized by financial
sharing and equality in decision making.

Although the measurements suffered such limitations as no
proven reliability and validity, the findings were
consistent with other researchers.
In this study, the financial contribution items provided
evidence that the majority of couples studied were
characterized by a high degree of sharing and equality.
Very few of the women were dependent on their partners
for financial support. While differences in income
between some partners existed, very few women perceived
themselves or each other as financially dependent on the
partner, with greater resources at her disposal.

In this study there was also no difference between the
two groups when it came to sharing the rent, bills and
equality of power. The majority of both groups indicated
they had equal shares. The main reason that respondents
answered they were not sharing was because they owned
their own home, or the partner or themselves were
unemployed and so was not able to contribute financially
as much as they would have liked. The idea that the man
is the bread winner in the heterosexual relationship
seems to no longer exist in this heterosexual women's
sample, as the results show equality in this type of
relationship as well.

Peplau et al (1978) quote Abbot and Love, in suggesting
that gay women, unlike heterosexual women are not afraid
to develop qualities of independence, self-actualization,
strength and intelligence, and that in preferring a same
sex partner, gay women choose personal autonomy over
culturally prescribed female roles. However emphasis on
autonomy may lead women to prefer relationships that are

less exclusive and last only so long as they remain
personally satisfying. It was felt that this may be
reflected by the number of relationships the gay women
had previously been in. It was found that the gay women
tended to enter more relationships but the difference was
not a significant one. Length of relationships in
heterosexual couples ranged from one month to 36 years,
with gay couples ranging from one month to 24 years.
This may add to the suggestion that the gay women in this
sample have chosen dyadic attachment over autonomy.

Since the findings of the study have found no
inequalities in the relationships, alternative
explanations can be proposed. Inequalities found in past
research may be unique and related to the personality
characteristics of the individuals involved, the
particular structure of the relationship or of the
lesbian community a gay couple may be active in, or to
variables that the study may not have investigated, such
as communication skills, or the cultural setting.

As seen in the results section only a small proportion of
the gay women share ownership of different assets. As
mentioned by Martin and Lyon (1983) gay women may not
like to pool their resources. Assets remain owned by
whoever bought them so that there are no problems should
they break up. Unlike married heterosexual couples,
there are few barriers to leaving a relationship, except
emotional ones, for gay couples. For heterosexual
cohabiting couples some barriers still exist in that the
law states that assets have to be halved if the couple
has been together more than 3 years. Because homosexual
relationships are not legally sanctioned this law is not
upheld in this instance.

Gay participants were asked to rate themselves on an
openness scale, from a hidden sexual orientation to
complete openness and honesty. Most of the women in this
study indicated they were fairly open and honest with
their lesbianism. A normal distribution was not evident
as it was in Albro and Tulley's (1979) research. Those
who were not open about their lesbianism, gave reasons
such as fears of misunderstanding, rejection and other
negative repercussions.

Albro and Tulley (1979) found that closeness of the
relationship to the family had an apparent influence on
whether they confided in them or not. In this sample a
large proportion of the gay women had told their mothers
but not their fathers. Possibly the fear of rejection
and misunderstanding was greater for the father.

In general few differences were found between the two
groups possibly because the majority of both sets of
women were in secure love relationships, regardless of
sexual orientation. Both groups had equal say in

decisions, in paying bills and sharing of chores. The main difference occurring between heterosexual and homosexual couples,was in the sharing of assets. There was a strong tendency for the gay women not to pool their assets, but to retain individual ownership.

General Discussion

The discussion following the social support, loneliness and lifestyle sections, comments on the relations found between lifestyle and specific variables investigated. Those sections also explore the implications of the findings in terms of predictions made from earlier theoretical work and experiments on the topic. Therefore this section will focus only on the more general implications of this study.

Implicit in this study is the idea that social support patterns and loneliness experienced by gay women may be different to that of heterosexual women, yet little research has been sought to identify any differences between these two groups of women. Also important in this study is the idea that the two variables may be associated. Jones and Moore (1987) looked at this very association, to find that lonely persons report having fewer friends, loneliness was inversely related to network size, density and frequency with which specific supportive behaviours occur. They also stated that loneliness has been found to be negatively related to both the quantity and degree of satisfaction with supportive others. However no evidence was found to suggest that the relative lack of social support causes loneliness exclusively. It may be that loneliness and social support are two related but independent phenomena.

Although this study suffers from some limitations, the results collectively suggest that the family is a significant factor in the gay women's lives. They are the main source of their loneliness and are perceived as a decreased means of support, which is supported by results of the BSSQ showing that less are called on in problem situations. One of the limitations pointed out by respondents were that it was difficult to fit the extended family concept into the questionnaire, some questions were old fashioned or hard to answer if the family is small. More positive feedback was received from the gay women who were pleased to see research being done in this area.

The results of this study suggests some general conclusions. Firstly, for gay women their lesbianism has alienated them from their family and secondly they wish to be feel as though they are more a part of the general community.

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APPENDIX 1

KINGSEY'S SCALE OF DETERMINING SEXUAL ORIENTATION

6   exclusively homosexual

5   predominantly homosexual with incidental
     heterosexual contact

4   predominantly homosexual with more than incidental
     heterosexual contact

3   predominantly heterosexual with more than incidental
     homosexual contact

2   predominantly heterosexual with incidental
     homosexual contact

1   exclusively heterosexual

APPENDIX 2

Information Sheet

Questionnaires

LIFESTYLE AND

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for showing interest in participating in my thesis research project. The project is looking at lifestyle and interpersonal relationships in women, and comparing these areas in heterosexual and gay women. Differences in scores may be attributed to differences in lifestyles. For this reason I will need to ask one question regarding your sexual orientation.

If you agree to do the questionnaire, set out below is what I would like you to do.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE FROM YOU

I would like you to complete a questionnaire, in my presence, on experiences you may have had in interpersonal relationships. When this is completed I will go through some questions with you concerning your life history and current living circumstances which will be useful as background information when I analyse the final data.

In addition to the questionnaire and questions I will ask, if you have anything you wish to add, or have any comments to make about any aspects of your experiences or the questionnaire, your comments will be gratefully received.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

You have the right to complete confidentiality at all times. Consequently nobody but me will know who you are or where you live etc. You will only be a number in the computer and you will not be mentioned individually.

Second, you have the right to withdraw from participation at any point. Naturally I would hope to avoid such circumstances and I would hope we could discuss any qualms you have, before you decide to withdraw.

Third, you have the right not to answer any question you chose.

Finally, I will give you feedback on results on the completion of the thesis, if you wish. If so, ensure that I am aware of your interest.

Thanks again.

JANET JOHNSON
RESEARCHER

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

LIFESTYLE

and

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire focuses on your experiences
and how things have been with you. There are no right or
answers to these questions. An answer is correct if it
is true to you.

Now we would like to ask some questions about social
relationships. For each statement, decide whether it describes
you or your situation or not. If it does seem to describe you
or your situation, circle TRUE (T). If not, circle FALSE (F).
If an item is not applicable to you because you are currently
not involved in the situation it depicts, e.g., a current
romantic or marital relationship, then score it false.
Circle the appropriate word to indicate your answer.

I find it easy to express feelings of affection toward
members of my family.   True False | [ ]

Most everyone around me is a stranger.   True False | [ ]

I usually wait for a friend to call me up and invite
me out before making plans to go anywhere.   True False | [ ]

Most of my friends understand my motives and reasoning. True False | [ ]

At this time, I do not have a romantic relationship
that means a great deal to me.   True False | [ ]

I don't get along very well with my family.   True False | [ ]

I have at least one good friend of the same sex.   True False | [ ]

I can't depend on getting moral or financial support
from any group or organisation in a time of trouble. True False | [ ]

I am now involved in a romantic or marital
relationship where both of us make a genuine effort
at cooperation.   True False | [ ]

I often become shy and retiring in the company of
relatives.   True False | [ ]

Some of my friends will stand by me in almost any
difficulty.   True False | [ ]

People in my community aren't really interested in
what I think or feel.   True False | [ ]

My trying to have friends and to be liked seldom
succeeds the way I would like it to.   True False | [ ]

I spend time talking individually with each member
of my family.   True False | [ ]

I find it difficult to tell anyone that I love him
or her.   True False | [ ]

I don't have many friends in the city where I live. True False | [ ]

I work well with others in a group.   True False | [ ]

I am an important part of the emotional and
physical wellbeing of my lover or spouse.   True False | [ ]

I don't feel that I can turn to my friends living
around me for help when I need it.   True False | [ ]

I don't think that anyone in my family really
understands me.   True False | [ ]

I have a lover or spouse who fulfills many of my
emotional needs.   True False | [ ]

My friends are generally interested in what I am
doing, although not to the point of being nosy.   True False | [ ]

Members of my family enjoy meeting my friends.   True False | [ ]

I allow myself to become close to my friends.   True False | [ ]

My relatives are generally too busy with their
concerns to bother about my problems.   True False | [ ]

Few of my friends understand me the way I want to
be understood.   True False | [ ]

No one in the community where I live cares much
about me.   True False | [ ]

Right now, I don't have true compatibility in a
romantic or marital relationship.   True False | [ ]

Members of my family give me the kind of support
that I need.   True False | [ ]

A lot of my friendships ultimately turn out to be
pretty disappointing.   True False | [ ]

My romantic or marital partner gives me much support
and encouragement.   True False | [ ]

I am not very open with members of my family.   True False | [ ]

I often feel resentful about certain actions of
my friends.   True False | [ ]

I am embarrassed about the way my family behaves.   True False | [ ]

People who say they are in love with me are usually
only trying to rationalise using me for their own
purposes.   True False | [ ]

I have a good relationship with most members of my
immediate family.   True False | [ ]

In my relationships, I am usually able to express
both positive and negative feelings.   True False | [ ]

I don't get much satisfaction from the groups I attend. True False | [ ]

I get plenty of help and support from friends. True False | [ ]

I seem to have little to say to members of my family. True False | [ ]

I don't have any one special love relationship in
which I feel really understood. True False | [ ]

I really feel that I belong to a family. True False | [ ]

I have few friends with whom I can talk openly. True False | [ ]

My family is quite critical of me. True False | [ ]

I have an active love life. True False | [ ]

I have few friends that I can depend on to fulfill
their end of mutual commitments. True False | [ ]

Generally I feel that members of my family
acknowledge my strengths and positive qualities. True False | [ ]

I have at least one real friend. True False | [ ]

I don't have any neighbours who would help me
out in time of need. True False | [ ]

Members of my family are relaxed and easy-going
with each other. True False | [ ]

I have moved around so much that I find it difficult
to maintain lasting friendships. True False | [ ]

I tend to get along well with partners in romantic
relationships. True False | [ ]

I find it difficult to invite a friend to do
something with me. True False | [ ]

I have little contact with members of my family. True False | [ ]

My friends don't seem to stay interested in me
for long. True False | [ ]

There are people in my community who understand my
views and beliefs. True False | [ ]

As much as possible, I avoid members of my family. True False | [ ]

I seldom get the emotional security I need from a
romantic or sexual relationship. True False | [ ]

My family usually values my opinion when a family
decision is to be made. True False | [ ]

Most of my friends are genuinely concerned about
my welfare. True False | [ ]

The statements which follow refer to feelings and experiences which occur to most people at one time or another in their relationships with friends. For each statement there are three possible answers: Yes, No, Don't know. Please circle the answer you choose for each item.

My friends give me the moral support I need
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

Most other people are closer to their friends that I am
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends enjoy hearing what I think
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

Certain friends come to me when they have problems or need advice
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I rely on my friends for emotional support
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

If I felt that one or more of my friends were upset with me, I'd just keep it to myself
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I feel that I'm on the fringe in my circle of friends
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

There is a friend I could go to if I were just feeling down, without feeling funny about it later
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends and I are very open about what we think about things
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends are sensitive to my personal needs
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends come to me for emotional support
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends are good at helping me solve problems
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I have a deep sharing relationship with a number of friends
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends get good ideas about how to do things or make things from me
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

When I confide in friends, it makes me feel uncomfortable
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My friends seek me out for companionship
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I think that my friends feel that I'm good at helping them solve problems
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I don't have a relationship with a friend that is as intimate as other people's relationships with friends
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I've recently gotten a good idea about how to do something from a friend
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I wish my friends were much different
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

The statements which follow refer to feelings and experiences which occur to most people at one time or another in their relationship with their families. For each statement there are three possible answers: Yes, No, Don't know. Please circle the answer you choose for each item.

My family give me the moral support I need
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

Most other people are closer to their family than I am
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

My family enjoys hearing what I think
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I get good ideas about how to do things or make things from my family
    Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I rely on my family for emotional support
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

When I confide in the members of my family who are closest
to me, I get the idea that it makes them uncomfortable
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Members of my family share many of my interests
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

There is a member of my family I could go to it I were just
feeling down, without feeling funny about it later
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

My family and I are very open about what we think about
things
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

My family are sensitive to my personal needs
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Members of my family come to me for emotional support
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Members of my family are good at helping me solve problems
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

I have a deep sharing relationship with a number of members
of my family
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Members of my family get good ideas about how to do things
or make things from me
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

When I confide in members of my family, it makes me feel
uncomfortable
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Members of my family seek me out for companionship
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

Certain members of my family come to me when they have
problems or need advice
    Yes   No   Don't know
    [ ]

I think that my family feel that I'm good at helping them
solve problems
     Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I don't have a relationship with a member of my family that
is as intimate as other people's relationships with family
members
     Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

I wish my family were much different
     Yes   No   Don't know   [ ]

The following questions ask about people in you life who give
you help or support. Each question has two parts. For the
first part, list all the people you know, but not yourself, who
you can count on for help or support in the way described.
Give the person's initials and their relationship to you (see
example). Do not list more than one person next to each of
the letters beneath the question.

For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the
overall support you have.

If you have no support for a question, put a tick beside the
words "No one", but still rate your level of satisfaction.
Do not list more than nine people per question.

Please answer all questions as best you can. All your
answers will be kept private.

EXAMPLE

8.   Who do you know who you can trust with information that
       could get you in trouble?

___   No one 1) T.N. (brother) 4) S.N. (father) 7)
             2) L.M. (friend)   5)   8)
             3) R.S. (friend)   6)   9)

How satisfied?

6	5	4	3	2	1
very	fairly	a little	a little	fairly	very
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied

1.   Who can you really count on to take your mind off your
       worries when you feel under stress?

___   No one 1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

2. How satisfied?

```
   6          5          4          3          2          1
  very      fairly   a little   a little    fairly      very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]
```

3. Who can you really rely on when you need help?

```
___   No one  1)              4)              7)
              2)              5)              8)
              3)              6)              9)                        [ ]
```

4. How satisfied?

```
   6          5          4          3          2          1
  very      fairly   a little   a little    fairly      very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]
```

5. With who can you totally be yourself?

```
___   No one  1)              4)              7)
              2)              5)              8)
              3)              6)              9)                        [ ]
```

6. How satisfied?

```
   6          5          4          3          2          1
  very      fairly   a little   a little    fairly      very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]
```

7. Who do you feel really appreciates you as a person?

```
___   No one  1)              4)              7)
              2)              5)              8)
              3)              6)              9)                        [ ]
```

8. How satisfied?

```
   6          5          4          3          2          1
  very      fairly   a little   a little    fairly      very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]
```

9. Who can you really count on to give you advice or ideas
    that help you to avoid making mistakes?

```
___   No one  1)              4)              7)
              2)              5)              8)
              3)              6)              9)                        [ ]
```

10. How satisfied?

```
   6          5          4          3          2          1
  very      fairly   a little   a little    fairly      very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]
```

11. Who will comfort you when you need it by holding you
    in their arms?

___ No one   1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

12. How satisfied?

  6   5   4   3   2   1
 very   fairly   a little   a little   fairly   very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]

13. Who can you really count on to help you feel more
    relaxed when you are under pressure or tense?

___ No one   1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

14. How satisfied?

  6   5   4   3   2   1
 very   fairly   a little   a little   fairly   very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]

15. Who accept you totally, including both your worst and
    best points?

___ No one   1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

16. How satisfied?

  6   5   4   3   2   1
 very   fairly   a little   a little   fairly   very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]

17. Who can you really count on to care about you, regardless
    of what is happening to you?

___ No one   1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

18. How satisfied?

  6   5   4   3   2   1
 very   fairly   a little   a little   fairly   very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied   [ ]

19. Who can you really count on to help you feel better when
    you are feeling generally down-in-the-dumps?

___ No one   1)   4)   7)
             2)   5)   8)
             3)   6)   9)   [ ]

20. How satisfied?

6	5	4	3	2	1	
very	fairly	a little	a little	fairly	very	
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	[ ]

21. Who can you count on to help you feel better when you
    are very upset?

____ No one 1)   4)   7)

           2)   5)   8)

           3)   6)   9)   [ ]

22. How satisfied?

6	5	4	3	2	1	
very	fairly	a little	a little	fairly	very	
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	[ ]

23. Who can you really count on to support you in major
    decision you make?

____ No one 1)   4)   7)

           2)   5)   8)

           3)   6)   9)   [ ]

24. How satisfied?

6	5	4	3	2	1	
very	fairly	a little	a little	fairly	very	
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	[ ]

We need a little more information on your circumstances.
Could you please answer the questions below.

Your age (in years): | | |

What is the highest educational qualifications you have
received?

....

.... | [ ][ ]

What is your present occupation? ....

.... | [ ][ ]

Do you: 1 rent you home
            2 own you own home
            3 pay board
            4 other | [ ]

Are you: 1 single
            2 married
            3 separated
            4 divorced
            5 other | [ ]

How many children do you have? .... | [ ]

How many of your children live with you? .... | [ ]

Do you live 1 alone
             2 with your husband
             3 with your partner
             4 with a female flatmate/boarder
             5 with a male flatmate/boarder
             6 in a mixed flat | [ ]

Do you hope to maintain your present living arrangements?
             1 yes   2 no

If no, give reasons: ....

....

.... | [ ]

The following set of questions are about relations with your partner. The questions are basically concerned with lifestyles.

How long have you been involved in your present relationship?

.... | [ ]

Before this relationship, how many relationships had you been involved in?

.... |[ ]

What was the major reason for previous relationships to end?

....

.... | [ ]

Do you see this as a permanent relationship?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

Do you do most of your socialising together?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

Do you believe in sexual relations outside of your present relationship?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

Do you hold joint: 1   2
                              - bank accounts   yes   no | [ ]
                              - loans   yes   no | [ ]
                              - motor vehicle   yes   no | [ ]
                              - property   yes   no | [ ]
                              - stocks   yes   no | [ ]
                              - bonds   yes   no | [ ]
                              - other (specify)   yes   no | [ ]

Would you be willing to support your partner financially if need be?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

How did you meet your present partner?

....

.... | [ ]

Is the payment of rent/mortgage shared?
    1   Yes 2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

If not, what proportion is paid by you and any particular reason for this arrangement?

....

.... | [ ]

Is the payment of bills shared?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

If not, what proportion of the bills are paid by you and any
particular reason for this arrangement?

       ....

       .... [ ]

Is there an equal sharing of power in your relationship
i.e. do you have equal say in decision making?
    1 Yes 2 No 3 Not sure   [ ]

If not, what percentage of say do you have?

       ....

       .... [ ]

Is your independence important to you?
         1 very important
         2 fairly important
         3 sometimes important
         4 fairly unimportant
         5 never important
         6 not sure   [ ]

What is your concept of the "women's role"?

       ....

       ....

       .... [ ]

Are you able to discuss concerns/problems with your partner?
         1 very easily
         2 fairly easily
         3 not so easily
         4 with some difficulty
         5 very difficult
         6 not sure   [ ]

The following set of questions are about relations with a
partner and lifestyles. Since you do not have a partner
at present answer what you believe if you were in a
relationship. You may be able to apply the questions to
the last relationship you were in.

How long have you been out of a relationship?

....   [ ]

Before this, how many relationships had you been involved in?

....   [ ]

What was the major reason for previous relationships to end?

....

....   [ ]

Do you see being alone as permanent?
     1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

In previous relationships did you do most your socialising
together?
     1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

Do you believe in sexual relations outside of a relationship?
     1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

Do you think it is a good think to have joint:
                                          1   2
                         - bank account   yes   no   [ ]
                         - loan   yes   no   [ ]
                         - motor vehicle yes   no   [ ]
                         - property   yes   no   [ ]
                         - stocks   yes   no   [ ]
                         - bonds   yes   no   [ ]
                         - other (specify) yes   no   [ ]

Would you be willing to support your partner financially, if
need be?
     1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

How did you meet your previous partner?

....

....   [ ]

Should the payment of rent/mortgage be shared if you were
living together?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

If not, why not?

       ....

       ....   [ ]

Should the payment of bills be shared?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure   [ ]

If not, why not?

       ....

       ....   [ ]

Should there be an equal sharing of power in the relationship
i.e. should you have equal say in decision making?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure

If not, why not?

       ....

       ....

Is your independence important to you?
          1 very important
          2 fairly important
          3 sometimes important
          4 fairly unimportant
          5 never important
          6 not sure   [ ]

What is you concept of the "women's role"?

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....   [ ]

Were you able to discuss concerns/problems with your partner?
          1 very easily
          2 fairly easily
          3 not so easily
          4 with some difficulty
          5 very difficult
          6 not sure

At what age did you have your first lesbian experience?

.... | [ ]

How many years have you been practicing lesbian?

.... | [ ]

Age you first told someone of your lesbianism, other than
your partner?

.... | [ ]

Who was the first person you told about your lesbianism,
other than your partner?

....

How many of the following (if applicable) know about your
lesbianism?

1	2	3	4	5	6
All	Most	Some	Only one	None	Not sure

		1	2	3	4	5	6		
a.	lesbian friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
b.	gay male friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
c.	straight friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
d.	neighbours	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
e.	employer	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
f.	teacher	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
g.	co-workers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
h.	schoolmates	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
i.	your employees	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
j.	mother	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
k.	father	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
l.	sisters & brothers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
m.	your children	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
n.	other relatives	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]
o.	other children	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]		[ ]

Of those who know you are a lesbian, what has been the reaction of each of the following to that fact? (answer those that are applicable).

1	2	3	4	5	6
very positive	somewhat positive	neutral	somewhat negative	very negative	not sure

		1	2	3	4	5	6	
a.	lesbian friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b.	gay male friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c.	straight friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d.	neighbours	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
e.	employer	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
f.	teacher	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
g.	co-workers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
h.	schoolmates	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
i.	your employees	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
j.	mother	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
k.	father	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
l.	sisters & brothers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
m.	your children	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
n.	other relatives	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
o.	other children	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Mark on the openness scale, how open you are with your lesbianism

    7 I am completely open and honest about
      my sexual orientation

    6

    5

    4

    3

    2

    1 I keep my sexual orientation hidden with
      few exceptions   [ ]

Do you attempt to present yourself as heterosexual at work and in the public?

    1 quite a lot of the time
    2 some of the time
    3 very little of the time
    4 only once
    5 not at all
    6 not sure   [ ]

What do you believe would be the outcome if your place of employment found out about your lesbianism?

    ....

    ....   [ ]

Do you feel very isolated from society as a result of your
sexual orientation? | [ ]
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure

Is society's acceptance of your lesbianism important to you?
    1 Yes   2 No   3 Not sure | [ ]

How important are the concepts of the lesbian community and
culture to you?
          1 very important
          2 somewhat important
          3 neutral
          4 somewhat unimportant
          5 not sure | [ ]

For the next question use the scale below, and right in the
score that is applicable to each statement
          1 quite a lot
          2 some
          3 very little
          4 once
          5 none at all
          6 not sure | [ ]

How much time do you spend in each of the following
environments?
          lesbian only   .... ____ | [ ]

          women only (gay and heterosexual) .... ____ | [ ]

          gay only (men and women) .... ____ | [ ]

          heterosexual only (men and women) .... ____ | [ ]

          mixed .... ____ | [ ]

Do you ever or have you ever experienced any of the following
in connection with your lesbianism?

1	2	3	4	5	6
quite a	some	very	once	none at	not
lot		little		all	sure

		1	2	3	4	5	6	
a.	harassment	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b.	loss of job	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c.	forced to move	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d.	arrest	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
e.	blackmail or threat of blackmail	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
f.	physical abuse	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
g.	verbal abuse, name-calling	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
h.	robbery	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
i.	shakedown	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
j.	shame, guilt	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
k.	fear of discovery	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
l.	other (specify)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]