

Self-Perceptions of Primary Care & Disclosure to Health Care Providers among Sexual Minority Women: A Systematic Literature Review

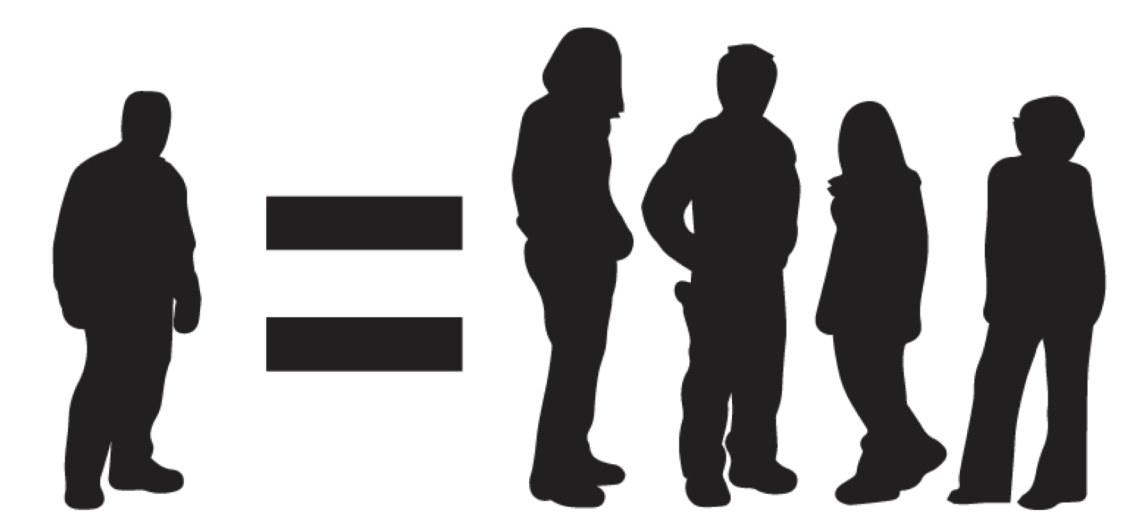
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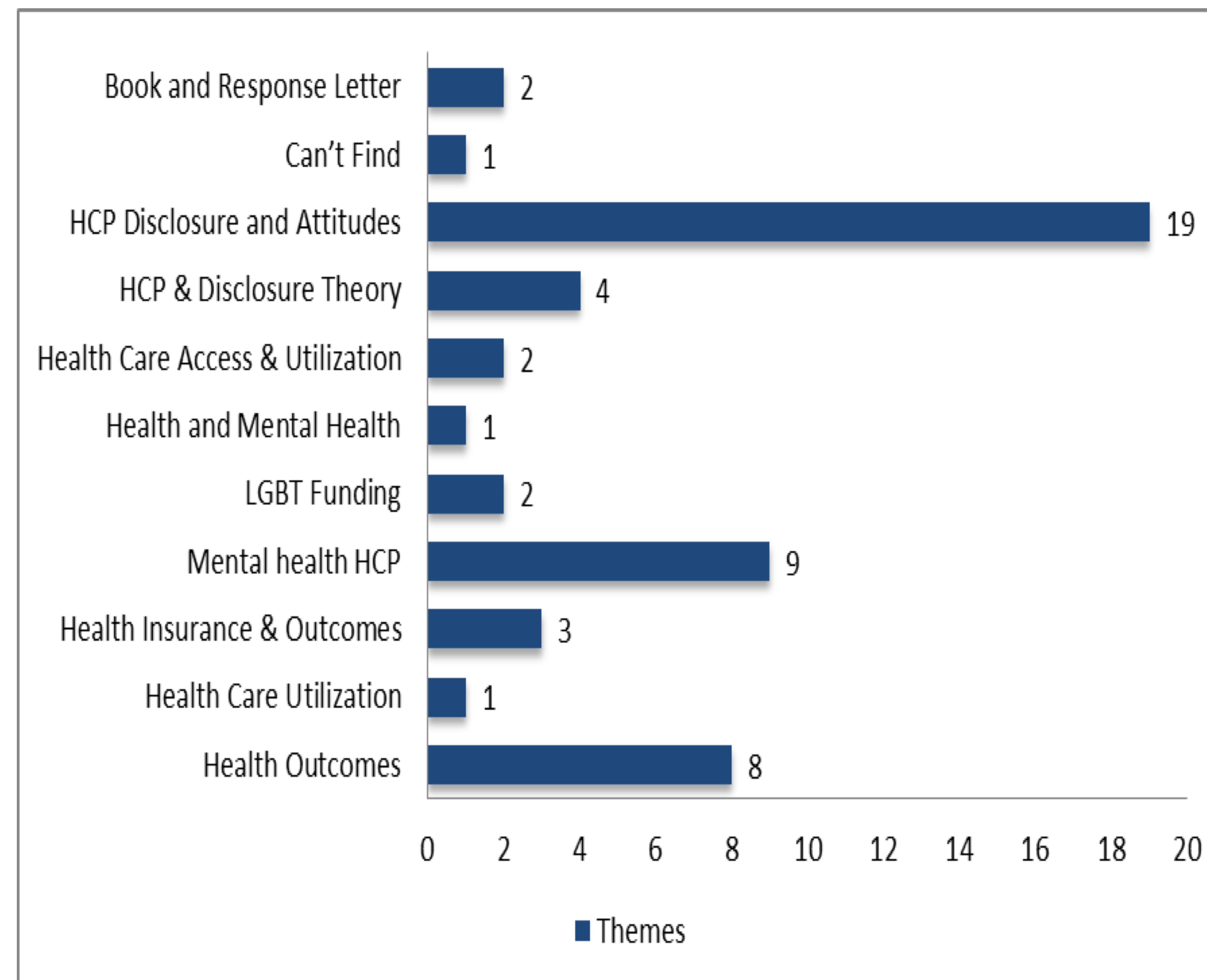


Collaborative Research Group
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BACKGROUND

- The health needs and concerns affecting sexual minority women (self-identified lesbian and bisexual women, same-sex attracted women and women who have sex with women or SMW) have long been underrepresented in the literature.
- Current research shows that sexual minority women experience a number of common risk factors which may contribute to disparities in health outcomes when compared to their heterosexual counterparts.¹
- SMW have higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use, obesity, and cervical cancer than the general population.
- Moreover, self-identified lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to be tobacco users, and diagnosed with alcohol and drug dependence disorders.²
- Since the current leading causes of death for women in the United States include heart disease and cancer, focus on health care utilization and barriers to care for SMW as a current public health concern is warranted.

Figure 1. The most common themes in sexual minority women literature.



RESULTS

- 53 articles were identified, and included the following SMW themes: Health outcomes, health care access and utilization, disclosure to provider, mental health, health insurance & outcomes, LGBT funding, disclosure theory, disclosure & health care, and provider attitudes.
- Future analysis will include the final findings from this literature search/review.

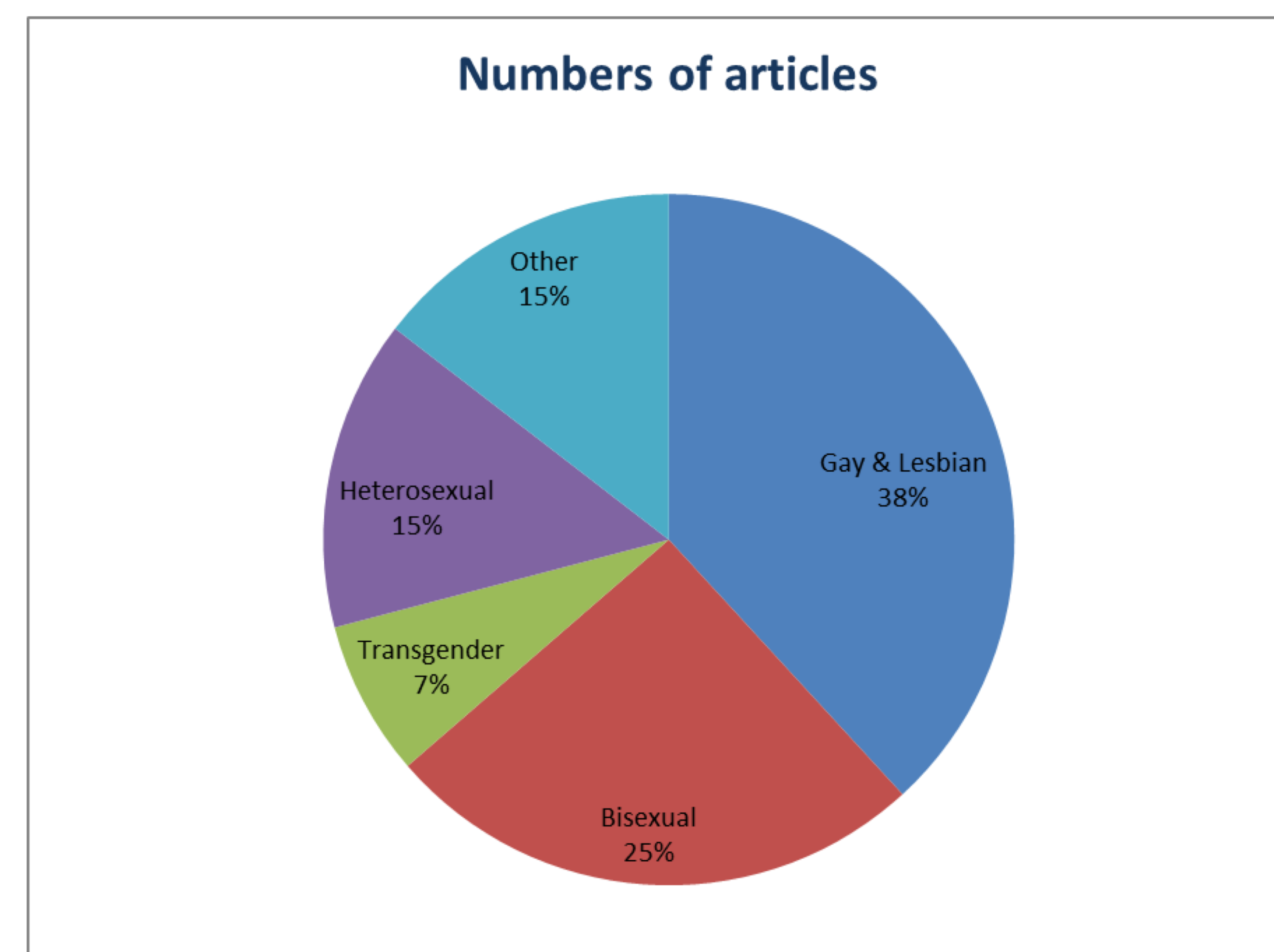
CONCLUSIONS

- These results indicate a need for future research that further explores differences within SMW populations (e.g., the differences among urban, rural and suburban SMW, and differences in outcomes by identity, behavior, and/or attraction).³
- In addition, disclosure continues to be an obstacle to building relationships of trust between sexual minority women and healthcare providers.

METHODS

- A systematic literature review of SMW and healthcare/health outcomes was updated through April 2018.
- The databases used to search for updated literature included Web of Knowledge and Google Scholar.
- Appropriate references in the selected articles were analyzed.
- Search terms included "health care disparity among sexual minority women," "sexual minority health," "health risk factors," and "sexuality with healthcare providers."

Figure 2. Frequency of sexual minority groups represented in identified studies.



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