



SOCIAL-BEHAVIORAL STUDY: Social Networks and Health among Older Lesbian and Gay Men in the Bay Area

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH – Pre-Screen – Web

Introduction

Thank you for contacting us about the research study on personal networks. Professor Claude Fischer at the University of California, Berkeley, in the Department of Sociology, is conducting a research study in collaboration with the University of Southern California and Nexant, Inc., a local survey company in San Francisco.

We would like to invite you to take part in our research study, which concerns how people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender get along with other people, including family and friends, over the years.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the different kinds of personal relationships that older lesbians and gay men draw on to provide physical and emotional support and to examine how life events like marriage, job change or retirement, and relocation affect those relationships.

Procedures

First we need to know if you are eligible for this study. If you agree to be screened for eligibility, on the next page we will ask you some very simple questions about your age, gender, sexual orientation, and whether you use a computer, have internet access and use a computer. This will take just a few minutes.

If you qualify and agree to be in this study, we will email you a link to a web-based, self-administered survey that you can complete at your convenience. In the survey, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the people you consider your friends and confidants, who you would rely on in case of illness or hardship, and the kinds of activities in which you participate and consider important. We will also ask you about more private things like your physical health and mental health. The survey should take about 60 minutes to complete.

About 12 months after the initial survey, we will again survey you regarding the same topics to see what, if anything has changed, and how you have adapted to this change. There will be a third survey about 12 months after the second, with about the same content and length as the first and second interviews. You do not have to participate, and even if you agree at first, you can always change your mind and drop out. There may also be opportunities for additional surveys. Prior to each survey we will ask for your consent to participate.

Participation in this study will involve a total of about one hour in each of the three waves, or 3 hours total of your time over the next 3 years. Because we wish to survey you at subsequent dates, we will also periodically take steps to maintain contact, via email, a phone call, or US postal mail.

Benefits of Participation

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research will help individuals and policy-makers understand what is important for managing the kinds of changes occurring in life that can be stressful. There are no costs to you for this study.

Risks

While completing the survey, some participants may raise questions about their coping styles, available resources, or health behaviors. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk. If any of the research questions make you uncomfortable, **you are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop participating at any time.**

At the end of the survey, if you feel at any time that you would like more information on health education, medical care, or stress reduction, we can provide a referral to an appropriate community organization

Please be advised that we are required to follow up directly with participants who report certain mental health issues such as thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

Confidentiality

No one outside the researchers will be able to connect answers to participant names. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used. Please be assured that we take precautions to minimize any risk associated with data security, such as keeping the answers to the surveys separate from your contact information. Your contact information, which we will gather just so we can get back in touch, will also be safeguarded with the same level of security.

Retaining Research Records

After you have completed the third survey, your personal contact information will be destroyed. We will save the survey data for use in future research studies but your identity will no longer be attached to your answers.

Rights of Research Participants

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You have the right to decline to participate or to withdraw at any point in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

Compensation

In return for your time, you will be paid \$25 for completing the first survey, then \$35 for the second survey in about 12 months, and \$50 for the third survey, about 12 months after the second. A check will be mailed to you about 6 weeks after each interview. There may also be additional incentives for referring friends or acquaintances that complete the survey.

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Dr. Leora Lawton, Project Director at ucnets@berkeley.edu, or 510-643-1270, or Professor Claude Fischer at fischer1@berkeley.edu, 510-642-4772. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights and treatment as a research subject, you may contact the office of UC Berkeley's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 510-642-7461 or subjects@berkeley.edu.

Please check the boxes below to indicate your consent to see if you are eligible to participate in this study.

Yes, I would like to see if I'm eligible

No, I do not want to see if I'm eligible

Please print a copy of this statement for your records.