

methodological changes in study design in order to collect the most meaningful and reliable data from research participants. Ultimately, COVID-19 has required researchers to alter or change their methods of conducting research. As the internet becomes more heavily relied upon for conducting research, it is imperative that scholars in LGBTQ+ aging and HIV/AIDS consider the potential challenges and opportunities that online research presents for their studies, and for research participants who are living with HIV/AIDS or who identify as LGBTQ+.

#### RECRUITING AND CONDUCTING ONLINE DYADIC SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH LGBTQ+ COUPLES FACING ADVANCED CANCER

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In this study, LGBTQ+ adult couples facing advanced cancer were recruited online. Eligible couples were sent a direct link to electronic consent and surveys in REDCap®. Participants were then invited to complete a 45-minute dyadic semi-structured interview regarding their experience of coping with cancer as a couple. This study faced difficulties in recruiting LGBTQ+ couples, and also faced the challenge of identifying and managing online responses from individuals misrepresenting themselves, and from automated accounts or “bots”. LGBTQ+ aging scholars must acknowledge how conducting research remotely with LGBTQ+ adults may necessitate changes in study design, such as changes to recruitment and more comprehensive eligibility screening designed to prevent and detect the collection of untrustworthy data. Ultimately, protecting the integrity of participant data in online research supports research accessibility and inclusion for LGBTQ+ older adults, and is the first step in conducting research that promotes health equity.

#### CONDUCTING COMMUNITY-BASED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH LGBTQ OLDER ADULTS OF COLOR DURING COVID-19

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COVID-19 continues to transform the way scientists conduct research with study participants, particularly older adults who are at high risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus. For older adults who may be negatively affected by the digital divide, inclusive data collection practices become even more nuanced. Qualitative researchers moving their research into digital spaces must think critically about their use of technology, and how it affects the quality of data as well as the participant experience. This presentation highlights ethical and methodological considerations from a completely digital, community-based, qualitative research study conducted alongside LGBTQ older adults of color during COVID-19. Strategies to build and strengthen community partnerships are discussed along with challenges and opportunities for collecting data in the current digital landscape.

Publicly available records are identified as a potential data source to understand the lives of LGBTQ older adults of color when in-person research is not feasible.

#### LGBTQ OLDER ADULT RECRUITMENT IN THE MIDST OF A COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: REMINISCENCES OF A POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW

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Within days of obtaining ethics approval for a qualitative study “Optimizing LGBTQ Engagement with Hospice and Palliative Care in the Island Health Region” our local Covid-19 lockdown began. It took several months to have new Covid-19 research protocols (Zoom Town Hall meetings/Zoom or telephone interviews) approved. Being impatient, I teamed with another group of researchers to launch “Covid-19: Your Current Experiences and Planning for the Future,” an online survey with a large qualitative component where we planned to oversample LGBTQ respondents. In time both projects were approved, and here I reflect on recruitment lessons learned. These include my perceptions how Zoom Town Hall meetings and interviews differ from those I’ve conducted in-person, reflections on how to use social media (including targeted Facebook advertising) to recruit participants, and sadly, how to manage anti-LGBTQ sentiment that resulted from even the most targeted advertising.

#### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH HIV+ OLDER ADULTS LIVING IN RURAL AREAS: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS DURING COVID-19

Erin Robinson, *University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, United States*

Older adults living with HIV/AIDS (OALWHA) in rural areas of the U.S. are a highly marginalized community. Intersectional stigma related to age, HIV status, geography, sexual orientation, gender identity, and race oftentimes create a complex lived experience for this population group. While there is a significant need for qualitative research that highlights the intersecting stigmas experienced by OALWHA in rural areas, recruitment challenges exist. Fear of being outed in their rural communities, due to their HIV status and LGBTQ+ identities, makes many OALWHA reluctant to participate in research. However, there is much resiliency in the population as well, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, as research approaches have pivoted to phone/virtual data collection during the pandemic, this can help promote anonymity among this population group. This presentation will detail methodological considerations for recruitment, data collection, and analysis for qualitative research with OALWHA in rural areas of the U.S.

### Session 4605 (Symposium)

#### SOCIAL RELATIONS, STRESS, AND RACIAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

Chair: Kristine Ajrouch

Co-Chair: Noah Webster

Discussant: Toni Antonucci

This symposium brings together four papers that address racial health disparities by investigating stressful aspects of