

# Gender role strain and the precarious manhood of sexual minority Kenyan men.

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[Granderson, Ricky M. Harper, Gary W. Wade, Ryan Odero, Wilson Onyango Olwango, Daniel P. Fields, Errol L.](#)

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## Abstract

Examining the impact of precarious manhood on the mental health of sexual minority men living in Kenya, we hypothesized that (a) men who have sex with men exclusively (MSME) and men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) would display differential patterns of conformity to norms of masculinity; (b) these differences would result in distinct patterns of association between masculine conformity and symptoms of psychological distress for MSME and MSMW; and (c) conformity to norms of masculinity would be bidirectionally associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety. Using data collected from 391 young men who participated in a community-based, cross-sectional study of HIV-related risk and resilience among young sexual minority men in western Kenya, we ran a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess differences in conformity to masculine norms and four hierarchical linear regression models to examine the associations between conformity to masculine norms and symptoms of anxiety and depression for MSME and MSMW. MANOVA results revealed no significant differences between MSME and MSMW in overall conformity to masculinity, although MSMW were significantly more likely to conform to the masculine norm of power over women. Regression results revealed that conformity to norms of masculinity was bidirectionally associated with psychological distress and that these patterns of association were distinct for MSME and MSMW. The discussion explores possible explanations for revealed differences between MSME and MSMW using existing research. Clinical implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research are also discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved)