

## **Longitudinal predictors of relationship dissolution among same-sex and heterosexual couples**

Research on same-sex couples has burgeoned in the past decade along with increased visibility and acceptance of same-sex relationships. However, very little research has been longitudinal or used population-based sampling, and thus we know little about how legal status and other factors might predict whether a couple remains together or dissolves their relationship. The CUPPLES study is an innovative project that began in 2002, when we recruited a large sample ( $N = 684$ ) of individuals in couples who obtained civil unions in Vermont during the first year of that new legislation (2000-2001). Index couples also recruited (a) individuals in a same-sex couple (friends) who did not have a civil union ( $N = 496$ ), and (b) a heterosexual sibling and his/her spouse ( $N = 448$ ). We followed up with all participants in 2005 and again in 2013 with an extensive survey examining legal status, stigma, and well-being.

This study examined longitudinal factors from time 1 (2002) and time 2 (2005) that predict relationship dissolution among same-sex couples in 2013. We discussed the extent to which legal status, including civil union in 2002 and subsequent legal unions including marriage and domestic partnership, is associated with relationship longevity and dissolution. Other factors we examined include gender, socioeconomic status, division of household responsibilities and finances, relationship quality, conflict styles, and social support. Additionally we examined the extent to which factors predicting dissolution differed between the same-sex and heterosexual couples in the CUPPLES cohort.

Results were discussed in light of the clinical needs of same-sex couples as well as policy implications regarding same-sex relationships in the U.S.