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Sizeism Among Fat and Big Men: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to capture the lived experiences of sizeism, or size discrimination, for fat and big men. The intention of this study was to identify the essence of fat and big men's experience of sizeism to more adequately understand how sizeism may impact the lives of these men to assist with the creation of more culturally competent psychological services and interventions for this population. A total of 10 participants were included in this study. Participants self-identified as fat or big, cisgender, and varied in race/ethnic identity and age (from 25 to 44 years). Data analysis of their experiences revealed five emergent themes: (a) accessing masculinity, (b) navigating thin privilege, (c) psychological consequences of living in fat male bodies, (d) sexual capital, (e) and fat/big as identity.

Keywords

body positivity, fat acceptance, masculinities, body image, size discrimination

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Significance of the Scholarship to the Public
This study deepens public understanding of the psychological and social impacts of size discrimination on men.

Sizeism is a form of oppression that enacts social privilege and inequality on its targets based on weight and/or body size (Abakoui & Simmons, 2010). Larger bodies are marginalized in mainstream Western society and thinness is seen as the norm (Guthman & DuPuis, 2006; van Amsterdam, 2013). People in large or fat bodies often experience stigma in multiple milieus of their lives including work, education, and healthcare (Rubino et al., 2020). Sizeism has been termed the last acceptable form of discrimination (Puhl & Brownell, 2001), and prejudice toward fat/big people appears to be increasing (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019). People in larger bodies who face pervasive weight stigma are often burdened with social isolation, depression, and low self-esteem (Rubino et al., 2020).

All bodies are political in the sense that many social constructions surround individual's self-perceptions of their bodies and other people's perceptions of those bodies (Rothblum & Solovay, 2009). What people are supposed to find attractive or repulsive as well as what garners respect and privilege are socially constructed. Various perspectives of critical thought, such as fat and gender studies, have acknowledged the importance of deconstructing how we relate to and qualify body image. Drawing specifically from queer theory, this study highlights the ways in which fat/big cisgender men do and do not uphold the hegemonic masculine norms of the United States. The traditional or hegemonic gender role for men has historically been one of protector and provider, carrying with it the requirement that men suppress their emotional responses and adhere to an ideal muscular body image (O'Neil, 2015). Adherence to the gender role socialization of cisgender men can influence the satisfaction they feel with their bodies as well as the development of disordered eating (Griffiths et al., 2015). There is a growing body of research that suggests that cisgender men are becoming more body conscious and are negatively affected by the perceptions others have about their bodies, decreasing their self-image and self-esteem (Cafri & Thompson, 2004; Galli & Reel, 2009; Grogan, 2007; Slevin & Linneman, 2010).

Sizeism and Men

Investigations around men's experience of body image have been increasing but are often limited in scope (Olivardia et al., 2004). Despite observations that eating disorders for men are on the rise (Mitchison et al., 2019), men's body image, especially in relation to experiences of overweight and obese

men, is largely uninvestigated. A larger body size can face environmental and spatial factors that can limit the physical experiences available to men as well as have a negative impact on their psychological health due to this marginalization (Owen, 2012; Puhl & Brownell, 2006). However, much of the empirical evidence examining men's body image has focused on men's drive for muscularity leaving a limited understanding of men's lived experiences with sizeism (McCreary & Sasse, 2000, 2002). Hegemonic male body image has been linked to negative psychological and behavioral consequences such as obsessive exercising, depression, and anxiety in young cisgender men and boys (Harriger & Thompson, 2012). Additionally, cisgender men with greater adherence to the hegemonic masculine norms for muscularity have been observed to spend more time observing and judging their own bodies and the bodies of other men (Cordes et al., 2016).

There exists great nuance in how sizeism impacts men based on the intersection of their social identities. For example, the intersection of race and weight has been shown to impact other's appraisals of intelligence in Black and White cisgender men (Trautner et al., 2013). The intersection of weight discrimination and sexual orientation has also been demonstrated to predict diminished psychological quality of life for gay and bisexual cisgender men (Austen et al., 2020). From an intersectional lens, participants are unable to share experiences that are unidimensional, therefore, identity intersections with size (e.g., race and sexuality) are represented. Intersectionality theory has emerged as a central premise for viewing an individual's experience of discrimination and upholds that interlocking oppressions converge to create or deny access to social privileges (Green et al., 2017). In examining sizeism specifically among cisgender men, this study examines the intersection of being both fat and male, highlighting how these social identities interlock to create unique experiences of social power, privilege and oppression.

The experiences of self-identified fat/big cisgender men were specifically targeted in this study to focus on those cisgender men who were likely to experience greater amounts of sizeism due to living within larger bodies. Larger bodies are most impacted by sizeism, while thin privilege serves to diminish this experience for individuals with thinner bodies (Bacon, 2009; Kwan, 2010). Acknowledgment of privilege can assist in viewing oppressive constructs, such as sizeism (Potts & Brown, 2005). For those that have thin privilege, it can be difficult to recognize biases especially if they do not have a necessarily "positive" view of their body, but they still possess and benefit from social privileges surrounding their body size (Owen, 2012).

The Present Study

A review of the literature revealed an absence of peer reviewed research that specifically examined "men" and "sizeism." Previous studies have, however,

investigated anti-fat bias, weight stigma, and weight related oppression to further understand the complex nature of discrimination based on body size (Bottamini & Ste-Marie, 2006; Davis & Bowman, 2015; Gough & Flanders, 2009; Haugstvedt et al., 2011; Mereish, 2014; Owen, 2012). The present study utilizes the term sizeism, specifically, to allow for the capture of an intersectional and diverse array of men's embodied experiences without focusing on the amount of adiposity. This present study extends previous research by utilizing an interpretative phenomenological approach to investigate cisgender men's experiences of sizeism and the meaning that these experiences have in their lives. Cisgender men of all sizes were eligible to participate in the study, the only inclusion criteria were that they identified as fat and/or big as well as cisgender. Self-identification of fat and/or big insured that researchers were not upholding any socially constructed bias of what constituted fat or big. The actual weight and size of the participant was not the focus, but instead their experience of having socialized experiences of being "fat and/or big" and the impact this has had on their lives. Identifying as cisgender male was an inclusion criterion for this study. This inclusion criteria enabled for greater specificity in viewing sizeism as well as sufficient homogeneity to shed greater light on cisgender men's body image. A diverse array of experiences was captured that often highlighted how intersectional identities informed cisgender men's experience of their bodies. The following two questions guided this investigation: (a) What are fat/big men's experiences of sizeism? and (b) What meaning does experiences of sizeism have in the lives of fat/big men?

Methodology

This study utilized interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is a qualitative research approach that allows participants to share their experiences of a phenomena of interest through the lens of their own sociocultural context (Smith et al., 2009). The foundations of IPA include "phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 11). IPA is a "well-established qualitative approach developed to investigate individuals' lived experiences" (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p. 147). IPA was identified as consistent with the goals of this study as it is a "suitable approach when one is trying to find out how individuals are perceiving the particular situations they are facing" while taking into account the meaning making of both the participant and the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 54).

In the current study, an interpretative phenomenological analysis was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and meaning-making of self-identified fat/big men who have encountered sizeism. Researchers were interested in developing an in-depth understanding of participants' interpretation of their experiences with sizeism. IPA provided the foundation for researchers to explore these interpretations while also

recognizing that these may be impacted by researchers' own lived experiences. As suggested by Smith (2011), we sought a careful and in-depth analysis of the subjective data collected from participants. To demonstrate this, we provide both direct quotations from participants as well as rich, illustrative interpretations of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Sampling Procedures and Recruitment Strategies

Consistent with IPA, this study utilized purposive sampling with a small sample size consisting of 10 participants. To maintain a certain degree of homogeneity, exclusion and inclusion criteria were set prior to recruitment of participants. Inclusion criteria included being: (a) a cisgender male, (b) self-identified as fat/big, (c) 18 years or older. Snowball sampling was also utilized as it assists in identifying information-rich cases by individuals who are especially knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). Fat/big men, as a marginalized and dispersed group, were perceived as the most appropriate to assist with identifying compatriots who may also be interested in participating in this research study. Information about the study was also disseminated locally and via listservs and other online platforms. The primary investigator also left informational flyers about the study at a medical center and various locations on a local university's campus in Southwest New Mexico.

Upon receiving information about the study, interested participants either called or emailed the investigator to express interest and/or schedule an interview. During the initial contact with the participant and prior to scheduling the interview, the interviewer confirmed that the potential participant met selection criteria. If selection criteria were met, the interviewer emailed the informed consent, demographic form, explanation of the study, and a copy of the semi-structured interview questions to the participant. Once the informed consent and demographic form was returned to the interviewer, the participant and interviewer confirmed a date and time for the interview via email. All interviews took place either via Zoom Video Conferencing (if participant was not local) or in a privately reserved room at the local university's campus. Four interviews were conducted in person and six were conducted via Zoom.

Participants

Participants included 10 self-identified fat/big cisgender men. Participants were of various sexual orientations, weights and heights, and racial and ethnic identities. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 44 years old. Five identified as straight and five identified as gay. Participants self-reported their racial and ethnic identities as follows: four identified as Latino, three identified as White, two identified as Afro-Latino, and one identified as Black. Weights ranged

from 210 to 430 pounds. Heights ranged from 5 feet 8 inches to 6 feet 3 inches. Levels of education varied from holding a doctorate degree to a high school diploma. All participants self-identified as fat/big and in addition included the following terms to describe themselves: gordo, chubby, chub, super chub, pleasantly plump, large, husky, fluffy, hefty, chunky, and thick.

Data Collection

All participants completed one semi-structured interview, which was utilized to gather an in-depth description of fat/big men's experiences with sizeism. Use of semi-structured interviews has been identified as the most effective way of collecting data for an IPA study (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The semi-structured interview guide used in this study consisted of 16 open-ended questions. Length of interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. All semi-structured interviews were recorded and later transcribed to facilitate data analysis. Transcriptions were edited to delete any identifiable information that may have been captured in the audio recordings.

Prior to the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked to identify a preferred pseudonym to protect their privacy. Additionally, prior to the interview, a demographic form was given to participants to collect information including age, height, weight, sexual orientation, gender identity, biological sex identity, race and ethnicity, level of education, positive identification as either fat or large, and any other terms they use to describe themselves. Each item on the demographic form allowed the participant to write in their answers as opposed to forced choice responding.

Data Analysis

NVivo software was utilized for data analysis using procedures consistent with IPA. Only the primary researcher engaged in data analysis, the secondary researcher served as an auditor in the later stages of data analysis and interpretation. The first step in data analysis, consistent with IPA, was the familiarization with the transcripts. Initial notes and observations were written down in the researcher's journal and notes. These notes were helpful as they influenced the initial coding done in NVivo. Within NVivo the researcher began initial coding, meaning participants' stories (or the data) was reduced into meaningful segments and assigned names. Significant statements were identified in the interviews about how the participants were experiencing size discrimination. For example, a comment regarding a participant's frustration with not fitting into public transportation spaces like other men was coded as Restrictions to Physical Space. These coded segments were then combined into broader categories or themes of related information. For example, the initial code of Restrictions to Physical Space was combined with other codes

like Restricted Access to Relationships to create the broader theme of Observing Thin Privilege. According to phenomenological design, these themes began to create the description of the phenomenon and impart the meaning that this phenomenon has for those that experience it, thus beginning to describe the universal essence of the experience (Creswell et al., 2007). Inductive thematic saturation (Saunders et al., 2018) was utilized to determine saturation for data analysis, therefore, when no new codes or themes could be drawn from across participant narratives, saturation was considered achieved.

Addressing Reflexivity and Trustworthiness

In an effort to enhance the trustworthiness of this study, researchers adhered to steps consistent with IPA as described by Smith et al. (2009). First, participants were selected based on their ability to describe the phenomenon under investigation. Secondly, all interviews were conducted by the primary researcher, who is a practicing psychologist and trained in interviewing skills. Prior to data collection starting, the primary researcher engaged in pilot interviewing in order to receive feedback on both process and questions. Lastly, findings of the study are presented in an organized and transparent manner. The interpretations made throughout the findings section are also supported by participant statements or quotes.

Additionally, throughout the duration of the study, the primary researcher engaged in the process of reflexivity, as this has been identified as an important aspect of phenomenological research, particularly IPA (Rodham et al., 2015). Researcher reflexivity was achieved by engaging in journaling during the data collection, data analysis, and writing stages of the study. Additionally, peer review, acknowledging the impact that the researcher's own experiences and assumptions may have on the findings, and consistent consultation with the co-author were utilized. This was done in an attempt to avoid the primary researchers over interpretation of the themes as well as to provide a space where own reactions and interpretations of the data were processed and explored. This is consistent with recommendations provided for IPA studies (Rodham et al., 2015; Smith et al., 1999). In addition, researcher's positionality statements are offered to the reader in an effort to be transparent about potential biases and life experiences that may have impacted the interpretation of participants' stories. Lastly, in order to be transparent about the findings, detailed participant quotes are presented in the findings section.

Researchers' Positionality

Author 1. I was "fat" before I understood what that would mean for me. My "fatness" was always commented on as everyone felt equally comfortable to talk about it, make fun of it, or give me suggestions on how I could be "better"

and lose weight. Growing up, I did not have the vocabulary to describe the type of discrimination I received because of my size, but it was always felt. It was not until I was in my doctoral program that I first encountered the word sizeism and finally had a name for what I had known my whole life to be a very real phenomenon. This led me to pursue the current study. I imagined there were other men like me who had experiences of sizeism, but felt alone and lacked the space to voice the discrimination they were facing.

I feel very aware of the many areas of my life that this type of discrimination has impacted. Having had intimate experiences with sizeism increases my awareness of this phenomenon and also requires conscious self-analysis in examining the collected data from these men. My intersectional experience as a fat gay Euro-Appalachian cisgender man is unique and the present study endeavors to deepen the understanding of sizeism as it relates to men across identities.

Author 2. Acknowledging my privileged position, my understanding of sizeism was limited to the handful of times I had heard of this concept during my counseling training. I came into this meaningful work through my interest in qualitative and social justice related work. Although my knowledge of sizeism, either academically or through lived experiences, was limited, my commitment to advocacy was a driving factor for my involvement in this work.

Results

Although there have been several research studies surrounding body image and the politicizing of people's bodies, most of the existing literature has been focused on the experiences of women whereas men, in comparison, have received less consideration (Cordes, et al., 2016). This study attempted to bridge this gap in the literature by investigating the experience of sizeism among fat/big men. Data analysis revealed the following themes: (a) Accessing Masculinity, (b) Navigating Thin Privilege, (c) Psychological Consequences of Living in Fat Male Bodies, (d) Sexual Capital, and (e) Fat/Big as Identity.

Accessing Masculinity

One of the most salient themes was participants' ability to access masculinity. More specifically, this referred to how their bodies assisted or deterred their ability to feel and be seen as masculine. The access to masculinity was commonly described by the participants and led to three subthemes including (a) Distance From Femininity, (b) Being "The Right Kind of Big," and (c) Intimidation.

Distance From Femininity. Many of the participants described how their bodies dictated their access to masculinity within society. For these participants, having a masculine body often meant having a body that was specifically distant from the female body in appearance, such as not having breasts. Additionally, men shared that discussing their bodies at all or showing too much concern for their bodies risked their access to masculinity, as they felt only women exhibit such body concerns. Many of the men in this study shared details about their struggle with issues of confidence, shame, and feelings of being less like men when their bodies had characteristics of female bodies. This included having feminine traits, such as having the appearance of breasts, due to adiposity. For example, Diego (30, straight, Latino) shared his sense of shame, stating the following.

> I love the beach, but I'm afraid to go to the beach or to the pool. If I do, sometimes I want to cover myself up. I'm very ashamed of my chest because I have man-boobs, and so it's like, to me, that's very shameful. It would be different if it was big pecs but not man-boobs … I just feel like we shouldn't have this (touching his chest), as men, and growing up from child to adult, I was always made fun of for my chest. Very, very mean.

For some participants, feminine traits not only created less access to masculinity but further alienated them from other men. Nick (35, gay, White) described his experience of how his size influenced his ability to both be accepted by other men and adhere to masculine social norms. Nick shared "the fatter I got though, the less I was able to hang out with the guys. Like I wasn't as masculine, yes, and so I was inadequate of what a man should be and so I would get depressed." For Nick, similarly to other participants, his weight and masculinity appeared to have a negative correlation. The greater his peers ostracized him, the more he felt depressed about the lack of comradery and acceptance he wanted with other men.

Right Kind of Big. It was common for men to share that they were aware of a hierarchy of size. Most of the men expressed the nuance of being large or big versus appearing fat. For many, size was desired but in the "correct way," namely appearing stronger and/or more muscular as opposed to fatter. Having more adipose tissue meant being lesser, despite their physical body still being large. For participants, having the "right" kind of large body (strong, muscular) heightened masculinity, whereas a fatter body lessened that effect.

Fabian (30, gay, Latino) discussed how he believed his body affected his ability to access masculinity via people's perceptions. Fabian shared that he views his body as being more like the right kind of big in that his broad shoulders helped him be seen as more masculine as this made him appear to have less fat but also large, thus capturing the masculinity associated with

bigness, and avoiding the negative consequences of being seen as fat. Fabian's ability to be associated with the right kind of big helped him avoid the negative consequences of sizeism and allowed him greater access to masculinity.

Intimidation. Many of the men described how a larger body gave the appearance of being intimidating. Intimidation was identified by six of the 10 men as being critical in their perception of accessing masculinity. Participants indicated that larger bodies helped them access masculinity by looking intimidating, however, they also shared how this intimidating appearance was a barrier to being engaged by others. Gomez (25, gay, Latino) described a sense of intimidation and power in larger physicality. Gomez stated, "Okay, this person's bigger, he could take down more. He'll lift more weight. He could do more because of his size." Gomez connoted a larger body with being able to exert greater physical strength and thus the perception that a big man contained more physical power. This assumption of physical power provided the larger man greater access to masculinity.

Other participants shared the perception that being large equaled being stronger, which created intimidation for those in the big man's environment. Sebastian (31, straight, Afro-Latino) recognized how his size and the implied intimidation it carried allowed him to be more easily "heard" in professional settings. He mentioned, "I do know that it benefits me in those moments where I want to be heard, I know that I can use it to make sure that I'm heard."

Based on participants' experiences, having a right kind of big body positively served men's access to masculinity because it increased the perception that they were intimidating and capable of exerting physical power or violence. However, this access to masculinity was tenuous and reliant upon the man's behaviors not distracting from the intimidation their form portrayed. Noah (27, gay, White) described how his appearance allowed him to subtly express masculinity via intimidation but explained that if he was found to be less aggressive or masculine in some other characteristic (such as being sensitive) his size quickly pigeonholed him into the other extreme as a weakling or coward. He explained,

> I'm probably the biggest teddy-bear you'll ever meet…But it's better to present a look of being the hard-ass or being a big mean person than not presenting that. At the same time, it does become a hindrance. Once people do realize that you're a big fluffy bear, you tend to be the mockery of everybody else, and your size really just does nothing to help you.

Based on participants' descriptions, the larger man could enjoy greater access to masculinity so long as it was assumed that the man himself was stereotypically masculine or stoic. The larger body was viewed as evidence of

softness if personality characteristics were revealed to be less stereotypically masculine.

Navigating Thin Privilege

All the participants described the perceived privileges that they believe thinner men have within society. Every participant discussed their views about how thinner men can navigate the world with greater ease. They perceived these privileges typically as increased access to all experiences, including easier access to the physical world, greater mental health, and greater access to relationships. Many men also described one facet of thinner men's privilege as the ease in which they accessed romantic relationships. Many of the participants perceived thinner men to possess fewer restrictions on their access to potential partners as they were more likely to be viewed as worthy for partnership. Nick (35, gay, White) shared his perspective of how, unlike himself, thinner men can easily access intimate relationships and have a seemingly endless supply of opportunities to engage in partnership. He stated, "A lot of my skinny friends will literally like, they'll break up with somebody and 2 days later they've started going out with somebody else." Statements such as these indicated some of the participants' perspectives that thinner men were viewed as able to be more discriminating in their dating relationships because they had more access to potential partners.

Participants also shared their perception that thinner men have many social benefits from their decreased weight. One of the examples was the concept that thinner men enjoyed greater societal privilege that engendered greater likelihood of positive self-appraisal and higher self-esteem. Diego (30, straight, Latino), for example, stated the following,

> I believe that they're not made fun of for their size, I believe that they don't feel ashamed of their bodies. I think that they have a positive view of themselves. I believe that they're told that they look good, that they're beautiful, they're handsome, they're pretty. I just feel like they have a higher—they feel a sense of value with society.

The "value with society," was also identified as something that was given automatically just by being thin. Meaning, this did not have to be earned. Monchito (37, straight, Latino) highlighted this argument indicating that unlike fat men, thinner men don't have to "prove" that they are not lazy, which is a common stereotype given to larger men.

Aside from increased relational opportunities, both romantic and social, participants shared their perception that thinner men can access more resources and are also bestowed value within society that fat/big men are not. Nick (35, gay, White) echoed Diego's (30, straight, Latino) sentiment that thin

men are able to access a multitude of benefits including being given primary value in society, he stated "literally, the world is their oyster, and they can do anything. Honestly, they can. The world is designed for skinny, or America is designed for skinny."

Participants also commonly shared the perception of physical privileges awarded thinner men because spaces are constructed with thin bodies in mind. Monchito (37, straight, Latino) shared his experience of not being able to physically navigate the world with the ease of a thinner man. Spaces and activities are limited to him as a bigger man. As an example, he shared his reaction to being unable to participate in activities with his children due to size restrictions at amusement parks. He shared, "When you go to roller coaster parks…I think that's probably the one that really hurts me. Sometimes I take my kids to a ride, and I cannot go with them because I'm too big."

Many of the men were easily able to outline privileges that they observed thinner men to have in society. These privileges allowed thinner men access to resources and spaces that the fat/big men viewed as denied to them. Discussion of thin privilege facilitated conversations about the impact that being denied these opportunities had on the lives of these participants.

Psychological Consequences of Living in Fat Male Bodies

Men described several common psychological consequences of having a larger body in the United States. These psychological consequences of being large in a thin-centric world revolved around men's self-perceptions, or how they view themselves, and their internal emotional experiences. Men's most shared self-perceptions surrounded their self-image, self-esteem, and self-worth. Men's most shared emotional experiences were shame, loneliness, and anger.

Self-Perception. All men shared the self-appraisals they made about their own bodies. These self-appraisals conveyed important internal messages about themselves as individuals and affected how they felt about themselves (self-esteem), how they viewed their own bodies (self-image), and how much value they felt they had (self-worth). Men often shared experiences that overlapped each of these three self-perceptual concepts therefore quotations are presented without separating subthemes in order to not lose the interactional nature of men's self-perceptions. Men commonly described their view of their own bodies in context of other men's bodies in society. Whether men viewed their body positively or negatively informed how they felt about themselves so much so that despite weight fluctuations, men often described an unchanging negative self-image.

Jack (35, gay, White), for example, described how his view of himself did not change despite weight fluctuations throughout his life. He reported feeling

"fat" even when he was younger and weighed less, sharing "when I look in the mirror—even when I was 100 pounds thinner, I looked in the mirror with the same amount of disgust as I do now." Similarly, Liam (29, straight, Black) described his journey with weight fluctuations and how his self-image was strongly tied to and dictated by his weight. Unlike Jack (35, gay, White), Liam did experience a benefit to his self-image when achieving a lower weight, although his weight was substantially lower than Jack's.

> I have an unhealthy relationship with my body and with my body image, and weight loss surgery wouldn't change that. That was really the key because even when I was in high school and I lost all that weight and had abs and everything, I became arrogant. My attitude was directly correlated with how I looked.

Similar to Liam (29, straight, Black), Nick (35, gay, White) shared that his self-image and self-worth are intimately tied to viewing his body size as larger. Nick described how viewing his body as thinner would increase his sense of worth enough to feel able to take up space and deserve the same as everyone else.

> Like, I'm not as valuable as them [thinner men]. I feel like I'm not as worthy of—I don't know. I think that I blame myself a lot because, obviously, I'm fat because of my issues and because I've done this to myself, I don't deserve some of the things as easily as people who are of normal size get. Then, I feel like I should because I think everybody should be treated the same. I feel like society thinks I don't deserve it, is what it is because I've done this to myself.

Nick's self-worth was greatly impacted by his view that society agreed that he was not as valuable a person and did not deserve the same access to resources as thinner men because he had caused his weight and therefore was unworthy. Societal perception also played a role in other men's self-perceptions about themselves and their bodies.

Several men shared how the negative comments from others about their bodies negatively affected how they viewed themselves. Sal (44, straight, Afro-Latino) reflected how the comments of others decreased his self-esteem and self-image. Sal described how his girlfriend's concern for his health added pressure to his self-image and decreased his self-esteem.

> My significant other adds pressure to how I feel about my body…She's like, "Oh, I worry about you. You have diabetes, dah, dah, dah" Well, I have Type 2 diabetes. Those moments, I'm like, "uhh, I just can't do it." I feel like less of a person because I'm so out of shape and I'm carrying all this extra weight. It's making me tired. Then, the depression hits and I'm hard on myself emotionally.

Sal's experience demonstrates how sizeism can affect the confidence of fat men. Additionally, Sal's narrative highlights the ways in which the opinions and comments of others can greatly impact how a fat/big man views himself.

The constraints that sizeism creates for fat/big men impact how they experience and view themselves. For example, Diego (30, straight, Latino) described his experience of sizeism as a violent attack that causes unseen but deeply felt wounds. He expressed how the cost of sizeism for the individual is a desire to be valued by others so much so that self-esteem and self-worth decrease, and behaviors become more violent as self-care becomes punishment. Diego described tiring himself out at the gym to gain the reward of societal acceptance.

> It's an attack in a lot of senses of the word, an attack mentally, mentally in the sense of like, your self-worth and self-esteem. It's an attack on your emotions because you're very much frustrated with your weight, you're sad, and physically because I feel like certain times for me, like, I tire myself out a lot at the gym because it's the look that I'm trying to get to. I feel like that's a tax on my body because I'm working hard for a reward that society gives. That reward is to look thin, to look a certain way to get some sort of praise about you, to feel valued by others.

Similarly, Jack (35, gay, White) described how his experience of sizeism made him feel pathologized, mentally ill, and possessing a body of chaos and death. He shared that his self-worth decreased because of this experience over his entire life. He explained the following, "I've been made to feel my entire life that … I'm out of control…the implication is that there's something like mentally wrong with me, disordered, like you can't control yourself." Jack described his decreased self-esteem and how his experience of sizeism subtracted from his view of future success in life and his ability to achieve what he desires. His self-esteem therefore decreased to a point of no longer pursuing goals and dreams. He indicated, "I always think about in my mind that, a large person doesn't have a bright future or they have a limited future, and again, I don't know how true this is—it's what's been drilled into my head."

Overall, participant's self-perceptions were intimately tied to their body size and their experience of sizeism. How men thought about their bodies, viewed their worth, and accessed confidence in themselves all intersected with their experiences of sizeism and the internalization of those sizeist messages.

Emotional Experiences. In addition to discussing issues related to self-perception, participants commonly described emotional experiences of sizeism. All men shared the emotional impact that sizeism had on them. They

reported three most common emotional experiences when confronted with sizeism. These were shame, anger, and loneliness.

Shame. Men commonly expressed feeling ashamed of their bodies when they did not adhere to the ideal lean and muscular male body. When men experienced shame over not attaining the mesomorphic ideal, they would often react with harsh negative self-talk. Diego, for example, expressed a feeling of shame around his weight stating,

> It was all just because I hated what I looked like, there was moments in which I would look in the mirror and tell myself that I'm ugly. I'll grab my fat and feel like, "This is your fault." Like there was no positive affirmation of being big at all.

Diego (30, straight, Latino) also described how he would lean into his shame with the hopes that it would motivate him toward weight loss. He explained,

> I'll shame myself to get motivated… I internalized that, and I think that's why when I go to the gym… This part is actually the fat I grab the most [touches his chest], because this is what I'm most shameful of.

Many of the men echoed how their experience of shame was triggered by not only internalized dialogue or self-talk but also by the comments of others. Jack shared how the critiques of others created shame for him. The criticism Jack received from his mother about his body and lack of affirmation about his body caused him to feel ashamed. Despite weight fluctuations, this shame has not lifted for him because of continued sizeism from society as a whole. He shared, "the message to me was, like, fat people can't be attractive and should be ashamed, like trying to mix oil and water … And, you should be ashamed of the way that you look."

Participants' descriptions of their experiences highlighted the sense of shame that stemmed from societal pressures. Internalized societal pressures were exacerbated by daily encounters and reminders of the worth that others attributed to them based on the comments made. The message from others that their fat bodies are something that they should be ashamed of contributed to feelings of shame in most of the participants.

Anger. Similarly to shame, most men expressed anger associated with experiencing sizeism. This emotional side effect of living large in a thin-centric world permeated relationships for many of the participants, causing an awareness that if they were thinner, their relationships with others (friends, partners, family) would likely be more positive. Diego (30, straight, Latino)

described realizing that if he was not "as fat" his relationships would be very different, and indicated feeling hurt and angry recognizing this. Diego indicated that his anger stemmed from his realization that his weight ostracized him from interpersonal relationships, but also that even when undertaking weight loss, he had to do so without any social support.

Fabian (30, gay, Latino) shared in Diego's experience of anger at the separation felt in interpersonal relationships. Fabian shared details of sizeist comments made by his fraternity brothers. He indicated that although this created a desire to respond angrily, he instead coped by acting aloof and seemingly uninterested in their comments.

Loneliness. Another common emotional experience of participants was the feeling of loneliness. They shared how their size often created separation from others and a longing to connect that left them feeling quite lonely. Unlike other marginalized groups, fat/big men often do not have an identified community to which they can easily gain access for support. For Diego (30, straight, Latino), this lack of social support was noted as he shared his experience of loneliness related to a longing to connect with other men who share sizeist experiences. Diego stated, "I wish there was like a men's group, I really do. I feel like I'd benefit so much from that because I need to hear other stories. I need to not feel alone, because at times I do feel isolated."

Noah also shared his experience of loneliness and a desire to create relationships of value. Noah (27, gay, White) identified his larger body size as a barrier to creating lasting and supportive friendships and the resulting loneliness this can create. This loneliness permeated not just friendships but was also experienced within families. Noah described how in his family, he felt ostracized and lonely even during family functions because of unspoken sizeism. He shared, "I tend to not be invited to go out with family and to do family adventures anymore. Even at family-get-togethers, like Christmas and Thanksgiving, I'm usually stuck on the inside, off in a corner, not really being associated with."

The loneliness that sizeism created in the lives of the participants formed a separation from others that at times, masked other traumas. Diego described how intense loneliness created by his size interacted with sexual abuse and created, for him, a kind of happiness in that at least someone appreciated his body.

> There was a sense of loneliness that I've experienced because of my size. I think that's why—I was sexually abused by my cousin when I was around 10, so when that happened, there was just this sense of happiness because it's someone who wants me; wants to be around me.

The ostracization that men experienced due to sizeism created profound loneliness that left men without support or understanding within their own families or any other social group. This loneliness, for some, was so potent that any reprieve felt positive.

Sexual Capital

Men commonly shared how their weight influenced their desirability to potential sex partners. The concept of having varying levels of sexual desirability to others has been termed sexual capital and the use of this sexual capital is understood as sexual currency (Green, 2008). Unlike increased access to romantic relationships, men perceived that sizeism intersected with how others viewed their sexual appeal specifically, not only as potential romantic partners, but as sexual beings. Potential sexual appeal or sexual capital was perceived by men to be informed by the perception of sexual orientation and sexual prowess.

Intersection of Sexual Orientation. Several of the men shared how their weight took away from their sexual capital, however, sexual orientation played a role in how their sexual capital and currency was influenced. Gay men were more likely to share experiences of fetishization and exclusion from gay culture due to their increased weight. Straight men were more likely to share experiences of having their sexual orientation and penis size questioned due to their increased weight.

Gay Men. For gay men, the experience of fetishization was common and relayed a perceived decrease in their sexual capital. Each of the five gay participants mentioned being fetishized at some point in their lives. None of the straight men reported having this experience. Participants described how being fetishized made dating more complex and created a dehumanizing feeling of being an object rather than a person. Noah (27, gay, White) for example shared,

> The few guys that do wind up coming around to try dating—it usually turns into just a random hookup. Or they're obsessed with my weight to the point of, "Okay. You're making me feel uncomfortable with how into my weight you are." They more fetishize my weight rather than appreciate me for the person.

Experiences being fetishized not only impacted participants' dating lives but also contributed to a sense of hopelessness about finding emotional connections through romantic relationships. Jack (35, gay, White) described,

> It gives me this feeling like you're never going to find anybody, or that, you know … where like, the only people who want to be with you are these guys that have a fetish for men your size, you know what I mean? … Like, you're good enough to get their rocks off, but you're not good enough to take home to mom.

Aside from fetishization, gay men shared other common experiences of how their size influenced their sexual capital. Participants found that they were marginalized even within their marginalized community of gay men. Nick (35, gay, White) shared how he has struggled to find a community of gay men who accept him but has found some repose in the Chub-Chaser subculture of fat gay men. The Chub-Chaser subculture venerates fat bodies and consists of fat gay men and their admirers (Whitesel, 2014).

> I actually went to a Chub-Chaser Convention once. It was weird because, like, I explained it to a friend of mine, that I felt like the pretty girl on spring break. Everybody wants to hang out with me, go out, and do stuff, and I was like, "I feel super popular." It was like for the first time I wasn't outside looking in, I was participating.

Involvement in the Chub-Chaser subculture increased Nick's sexual capital and allowed him to express his sexuality, be valued as a potential sex partner, and be included in social activities within the Chub-Chaser paradigm whereas mainstream society and gay culture had rejected him.

Straight Men. Straight men shared how their size influenced sexual capital in different ways than gay men. Straight men did not share experiences of fetishization or difficulty finding community because of their size. Instead, the straight participants shared how their sexual capital was diminished as their sexual orientation and penis size were questioned based on their size. One participant, Monchito (37, straight, Latino), shared that as a young man, his sexual orientation and penis size were frequently questioned because of his size. Monchito's experience created in him a reaction of aloofness to counter the emasculating comments being made about his body. All straight men shared in Monchito's experience of people speculating the size of their penis and the implication of decreased masculinity. Liam (29, straight, Black) shared his experience of speculations about his penis size influencing his sexual capital, as he perceived that thinner men were assumed to have larger penises. Liam went on to share that when he was younger and thinner, his confidence in himself and his penis size increased, and he experienced an increase in his sexual capital.

Overall, the straight participants shared in their experience of how their size influenced their sexual capital via speculations about their penis. Fat men are seen to have smaller penises and thus be less masculine and less of a desirable

sexual partner because they cannot sexually satisfy women. The straight men shared how this speculation created a barrier to attracting a partner, but also impacted their self-confidence.

Sexual Prowess. Many men shared how their sexual prowess, or ability to have sex that is satisfying to a potential sex partner, was questioned or discounted due to their size, and this influenced their self-confidence and sexual capital with desired partners. Liam (29, straight, Black) shared how the cultural assumption of a lack of sexual prowess led him to research his physiology out of insecurity that he could not perform. Being able to satisfy and attract a sexual partner was echoed by Sebastian (31, straight, Afro-Latino), who shared his experience that having sexual capital was crucial in understanding oneself as a man in the United States. For Sebastian, sexual prowess was rooted in the idea that you can be desired by a potential sex partner and possess the ability to "sexually conquer" this partner. He shared his belief that "when you aren't capable of being the interest of a woman, then you're not a man. It's like if women aren't interested in me, then I'm not a man." His comments also imply sexual dominance over women as a vehicle for masculinity for straight men. However, women appeared to control Sebastian's access to masculinity via sexual capital as their attraction to him and desire to have sex with him defined his manhood.

Other men were less focused on dominance or sexual performance, but rather with the number of sexual partners as an indication of sexual prowess. Diego shared that it wasn't until he lost weight that he was able to feel like he had any sexual prowess because his sexual currency increased. This increase in sexual capital assisted in facilitating sexual partners, increasing his sense of sexual prowess and even his sense of masculinity.

Fat/Big as Identity

All of the men shared that sizeism was perceived as an important part of every experience and difficult to separate out from other identities. The permanence of size was shared by Jack (35, gay, White), who shared that sizeism was always present along with his other identities. He stated, "I'm like an obese gay man or I'm obese American, or I'm obese White man … you name it and I'm obese. I feel like my obesity follows me like my shadow, and like that's kinda my partial identity." For Jack, his obesity was not something that could be excluded from any of his other identities. Although Jack does not experience racial/ethnic discrimination, he was able to identify that his sizeist experiences were co-occurring with his other experiences and still modified his racial/ethnic identity from a White man to an obese White man.

Despite the enhanced difficulties associated with being seen as intimidating as a big man of Color, Liam (29, straight, Black) was the only participant to

describe that his size was a positive status symbol within his ethnic group. He explained that in African American culture, his size allowed him to access masculinity with those inside his culture. However, this positive status was limited to in-group interactions. Liam shared,

> Some things associated with being a big Black man, on one hand, internally, in the community, it's a status symbol in some ways. Being 6 foot, 300-pound Black man with a beard and dreadlocks can also make me seem very scary or very intimidating outside the community.

The intersection of size and racial/ethnic identity created a unique culturally encapsulated experience of respect for Liam.

Another example of the ever-presence of sizeism is viewed in Fabian's experience of how sizeism and classism converged to inform his racial/ethnic identity. Fabian's size could not be separated from his experience of his racial/ethnic identity. He indicated,

> Culturally, I think that's where my assumptions come from. Like I said, I would go to Mexico and they're like, "You have the best life. You have a really good life." Which underlying means that you have all this food available to you. You don't have to worry about not having food on the table or the next day or you're not suffering in that kind of way. Instead, it's like you have the best life and that's why you're fat.

The intersection of size and racial and cultural identity caused him to feel like an outsider when visiting family in Mexico. For Fabian, his size was an indication of economic class compared to cousins in Mexico. Like all other participants, Fabian experienced the consistent intersectionality of size within his sociocultural sphere. It was not something that could be easily differentiated.

Intersection With Race. All the men of Color experienced a persistent intersectionality of sizeism in a unique way. Their experiences of racism co-occurred with sizeism, and their size appeared to modify their experience of racism. For Liam (29, straight, Black), Sal (44, straight, Afro-Latino), and Sebastian (31, straight, Afro-Latino) the intersection of size and race created a unique risk by being larger and thus more visible and intimidating, but also by being perceived as guilty and threatening because of race. This intersection created what Liam saw as a need for reflection on how he would be more likely to be approached with lethal force by law enforcement.

> I really meditated on that after Mike Brown was killed. Because racially, sociohistorically, we know that my Blackness is often the presumption of guilt.

> [laughs] Now, because of my size, I'm perceived a threat without having done anything. That's the difference between if me and an officer are going back and forth, my weight is the difference between him pulling out a gun, or him pulling out a taser.

Liam's experience as a Black man was deeply and dangerously impacted by his size. He was aware that his size would be seen as intimidating and thus was likely to increase fear in a police officer. Racism and sizeism converged and compounded one another to increase Liam's vulnerability to being discriminated against and potentially harmed. However, Liam also recognized that he desired bigness as it assisted with in-group safety. He shared, "I always wanted to be big. I always wanted to be intimidating. In my mind, being thin was never desirable. Thin got you looking like a victim." Liam's experience vividly portrays the nuanced intersection of gender, size, and racial identities.

Other men of Color shared how this confluence of size and race was a double negative that would worsen both in- and out-group discrimination. Each of the Latino participants were similar in their view that within their families, it was clear that being both fat and darker skinned would be the worst possible situation. For example, Diego shared how for him, the intersection of size and race was an added negative his family strongly discouraged. For Diego, his family perceived his deeper complexion as already presenting a barrier to beauty, worth, and success. Being fat would be another inescapable layer of being lesser. This created a dissonance of existence in the mutual exclusion of being "brown and fat." Diego perceived having a lighter skin color as a protective factor against experiencing sizeism within his culture and family, the assumption being that Diego would receive less concern about his size if he had had a lighter skin color. However, from the experiences shared by all participants throughout this study, it seems that Diego's experience of sizeism would have persisted, as all men shared the permanence and ubiquity of sizeism.

All of the men were unable to experience their racial/ethnic identity without the intersection of their body size. This was especially profound for the men of Color, who often reported experiencing sizeism and racism simultaneously. Regardless of racial/ethnic background, sizeism was ever present within their experiences and influenced how they fit within their own racial/ethnic groups. Each man described a sense of othering from their racial/ethnic group because of being fat, as that label could not be assuaged.

Discussion

The experiences shared by the men in this study assist in extending previous knowledge of the male body image and mental health by allowing us to view how sizeism impacts cisgender men's lives. Body image and size has been

linked to negative psychological and behavioral consequences for cisgender men (Harriger & Thompson, 2012; Owen, 2012; Puhl & Brownell, 2006). Extending findings by Puhl et al. (2008), this study highlights not only the prevalence of sizeism, but outlines specific ways in which sizeism impacts cisgender men via the following themes: Access to Masculinity, Navigating Thin Privilege, Psychological Consequences of Living Fat and Male, Sexual Capital, and Fat/Big as Identity.

Accessing Masculinity

Supporting previous findings (Bottamini & Ste-Marie, 2006; Grogan & Richards, 2002), participants shared how their bodies needed to be large and appear strong, but they had to be careful to present their bodies in a way that did not look fat, as this would be perceived as a weak and more feminine body. Most of the participants in this study were unsatisfied with their bodies, regardless of the wide range of reported weights. This speaks to the prevalence of body image concerns for men, and the restricting hegemonic masculine norms that keep men from sharing their concerns. In fact, a few participants shared how they felt they could not share feelings about their bodies because it would subtract from their masculinity, supporting findings from Pope et al. (2000) that men are not socialized to discuss body issues as these are considered feminine concerns.

Navigating Thin Privilege

The prevalence of sizeism created a keen awareness of the unique privilege of thin men for participants, supporting findings by Owen (2012). Additionally, participants shared the perception of access to clothing and romantic relationships as privileges that thinner men benefit from, supporting findings by Aruguete et al. (2009) and Saguy and Ward (2011). Existing in a thinner body is a privileged status that warrants further awareness raising in both research and clinical practice.

Psychological Consequences of Living Fat and Male

The most powerful accounts shared by participants was the impact of sizeism on their mental health. Findings from this study support previous findings (Eisenberg et al., 2003; Keery et al., 2005; Vartanian & Shaprow, 2008) that lowered self-esteem is a common psychological consequence of experiencing sizeism. Participants shared broadly how their self-perceptions were negatively impacted by the daily sizeism they faced. Participants articulated how sizeist feedback informed the internalization of sizeism and tied their self-esteem to their physical bodies.

This study extends previous findings (Harriger & Thompson, 2012; Olivardia, 2007) to more specifically capture the common emotional consequences experienced by men who are faced with sizeism: shame, anger, and loneliness. Being able to focus on the emotional presentation rather than broadly stating psychological effects gives more specificity to how fat/big men may respond to oppression of this kind.

Sexual Capital

Extending findings by Boyes and Latner (2009), participants shared their experience of decreased sexual desirability due to their larger bodies. Sexuality did appear to impact how sexual capital was navigated. For example, fat gay participants shared that they were only able to receive body acceptance within the restricted and rare social groupings of the gay Chub-Chaser subculture, supporting findings by Whitesel and Shuman (2013). Gay participants shared how they struggled to find community within mainstream culture, but also within the broader gay culture. These participants shared that in their experience, others like them were spread out throughout the country and therefore it was difficult to find social settings in which they could be with others who venerated rather than ridiculed larger male bodies. The current study extends the findings of Bottamini and Ste-Marie's (2006) exclusively heterosexual sample by finding penis size only a concern for straight men. This suggests further investigation into the nuance between straight and gay cisgender fat men to discern if the difference in concerns about penis size is uniquely affected by the intersection of body size and sexuality.

Fat/Big as Identity

Participants shared that their identity as a person of size persisted regardless of place and other identities. Supporting previous findings (Latner et al., 2008), participants explained how their size continually intersected their racial identity and at times, compounded other forms of discrimination, such as racism. Drawing attention to the social justice concerns of multiple oppressed identities, participants shared experiences of racism co-occurring with sizeism to create a greater risk of physical violence for Black and Afro-Latino men or in-group prejudice for Latino men. These narratives enrich the understanding of how intersectional marginalized identities can leave some men doubly disadvantaged.

Limitations

Several limitations exist in the capture of the sizeist experience for men in this study. The first is the inclusion criteria of being a cisgender male. A broader

spectrum of men was not included due to the unique relationship that different groups of men will have with their bodies and the gender socialization pressures that dictate how they and others relate to their bodies. Cisgender men were of particular interest in this study as the intersection of cisgender male and fat/big identities is often overlooked in the literature. However, this is only the beginning of how sizeism impacts men across the gender identity spectrum. Future research is needed to examine the impact of sizeism on transmen or masculine identifying individuals.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of specificity into how one's experience of body size can be informed by race and sexuality. The men in this study came from diverse backgrounds and their racial and sexuality identities impacted how they experienced sizeism in their daily lives. The intersection of gender, race, and size at times served as a benefit for men, for example, when they desired to be intimidating or command attention at work, however, this intersection could also pose a risk when in a different setting, such as interacting with law enforcement. Additionally, the intersection of size and sexual orientation impacted the amount of capital or disadvantage experienced by participants. For example, straight men faced challenges to their sexuality, while gay men found Chub-Chaser subcultures. A deeper understanding of how men in specific racial, ethnic, and sexuality groups experience the costs and benefits of their size is needed to clarify the nuances of these intersections.

Another limitation of this study is that the participants were all located in the United States. Although participants were from various states, the intersection of how they felt living in their region and its impact on their experience of sizeism was not specified in the interview. Greater specificity regarding regional culture and immigration status could enhance our understanding of how sizeism impacts cisgender men. Lastly, a limitation to the present study is the absence of more racial/ethnic groups, such as Asian American men. This lack of representation may have been due to the area in which the study was most prominently advertised, the Southwest United States. Greater inquiry to include more representative samples of the United States is recommended for future research.

Implications for Practice, Training, and Education

The participants' stories highlight their difficulties and inform practitioners of the need to develop sensitive strategies for conducting mental health services. To provide more informed care to our cisgender male clients, it is important to understand the complexities of their body image. These men's stories serve as a call for mental health providers to consider the complex nature of cisgender men's relationships to their bodies. Understanding that men have rich and diverse embodied experience is paramount to greater advocacy for men's mental health initiatives. For example, treating disordered eating as well as

intentionally bringing body image into the therapy room as an undeniable aspect of men's experiences. In practice and training, this could look like encouraging clinicians and students to confront their internalized sizeism or fatphobia and not be afraid to directly address the barriers and benefits that inhabiting a larger body can have in the lives of their cisgender male clients. Additionally, clinicians and educators can ensure that their lobbies and offices are equipped with size-friendly furniture and their offices are easily accessed from parking in terms of structure and distance. In multicultural training and education, students would be well served to have sizeism included in conversations about intersectionality, oppression, and power. As participants demonstrated, body size has the potential to increase a man's experience of social power if he is the right kind of big (e.g., large due to muscularity) or decrease his social power if he is not (e.g., large due to adiposity). Additionally, educators can practice sensitivity to sizeism when students embark on external practicum and advocate and ensure that students are being respected and given equity in terms of space and access to training materials and environments. Educators are also encouraged to consider the cost restrictions of professional dress for larger students as well as what their programs define as professional attire to expose any inherent bias in what is considered to appear "professional." The pervasive approach to practice and training in counseling psychology reflects dominant culture and assumes equal access to space and resources and abilities, thereby privileging thinner bodies. This study challenges providers to examine their bias and deconstruct how they perpetuate or ignore men's embodied experiences as central to their mental health and well-being, especially fat/big men. These findings inform the social justice focus of counseling psychology as it elucidates fat/big men as a diverse and marginalized group that face unique interpersonal and societal discrimination within the United States.

The present study extends the existing literature by focusing on the often-overlooked experience of fat/big men. Bringing to light the challenges of living in a world that is thin-normative enhances one's understanding of the impact of sizeism as well as allows them to see the role of body image more clearly in the lives of cisgender men. The present study demonstrates the ways in which fat/big cisgender men struggle and succeed in creating relationships with themselves, their environments, their bodies, and others. Men's identity as fat/big is omnipresent in their lives, and this intersectional nuance calls for inquiry to increase the field's understanding of men, allowing for more effective and informed mental health care. Specifically, more research is needed in the ways that sizeism and body image impacts men's intimate relationships, their access to social privilege, and informs their likelihood to seek out health services of all kinds.

Conclusion

Overall, findings from this study highlighted the intersection of gender and sizeism by examining the experiences of sizeism among fat/big cisgender men. Participants' stories shared the essence of sizeism experienced by fat/big cisgender men in the United States. Sizeism for fat/big cisgender men primarily impacted their access to masculinity, navigation of thin privilege, sexual capital, self-perceptions and emotions, and the enduring intersectionality of the fat/big identity. Participants experienced sizeism across milieus including relationships, employment, and medical settings. These men often referenced restricted access as their primary difficulty whether that be restricted physical access such as in amusement parks or restricted access to masculinity due to their larger size.

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