Caring for LGBTQ patients: exploring physicians’ personal and professional value conflicts
Sage J. Coe Smith, MD, PGY-3

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- Terminology
- What is bias?
- Current local and national attitudes surrounding the LGBT population
- Improving physician cultural competence

LGBTQ+ Terminology

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer/Questioning
- Cisgender
- Ally
LGBT Statistics

- The William's Institute estimates that 9 million Americans identify as LGBT (~3.8%)

Utah LGBT Statistics (2010 census)

- 3.2% of Utah population identify as LGBT
- 3,909 same sex couples
- 4.5 same sex couples per 1,000 households

https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/#density
Utah LGBT Statistics (2010 census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Same-sex couples per 1,000 households</th>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

LGBT health disparities

- Lesbian & bisexual females are less likely to get preventative services for cancer
- Transgender individuals have higher rates of HIV/STDs, victimization and mental illness
- LGBT populations have higher rates of tobacco, alcohol and drug use
- LGBT youth are 2-3x more likely to attempt suicide
- LGBT youth are more likely to be homeless
- Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs

What is bias/attitude?

- **Bias/attitude**: a person’s evaluation of a concept (person, place, thing, idea, etc)
- **Explicit attitude/bias**: a concept you deliberately think about or consciously control
  - Typically self reported
- **Implicit bias**: positive and negative evaluations that are not accessible to our conscious awareness and/or control.
  - Automatic responses, measured with Implicit Association Test (IAT)
Implicit bias

- Measured using the Implicit Association Test (IAT)
- As physicians we work with many vulnerable populations
  - Minority ethnic people, immigrants, elderly, mentally ill, disabled individuals, etc
- Systematic review to explore implicit bias in healthcare
  - 35/42 studies found evidence of implicit bias
  - Wide variety of topics: race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, age, weight, having AIDS, IVDU, mental illness, disability
  - Occasionally implicit and explicit bias align, but normally divergent

How does IAT work?

- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
  - Involves sorting pictures and words as quickly as possible, calculates errors to determine if there is an unconscious bias

How does IAT work?
How does IAT work?

- Local physician LGBTQ attitudes
  - Survey sent to 106 primary care providers in the Ogden area
  - 39/106 responses, 2 incomplete (37% response rate)
  - Demographics of responders:

- Personal relationships and interactions with LGBTQ individuals
Exploring local attitudes surrounding LGBTQ rights

Same sex marriages ___________ recognized by the law as valid with the same rights as opposite sex marriages

- Should be
- Should not be

Exploring local attitudes surrounding LGBTQ rights

It should be ______ for business owners to refuse to serve same-sex partners.

- Local
- E-Local

Exploring local attitudes surrounding LGBTQ rights

Transgender people should use the bathroom/locker room of their ______

- Gender assigned at birth
- Preferred gender identity
Exploring local attitudes, female providers v. male providers

Transgender people should use the bathroom/locker room of their _______.

- Male providers: 52%
- Female providers: 81%

Exploring local attitudes, female providers v. male providers

Same sex marriages ______ recognized by the law as valid with the same right as opposite sex marriages.

- Male providers: 82%
- Female providers: 82%

LGBTQ explicit attitudes

Which statement best describes you?

- Strongly prefer straight people: 10.27%
- Slightly prefer straight people: 10.01%
- Slightly prefer LGBTQ people: 5.41%
- Equally prefer straight people: 67.57%
- Slightly prefer LGBTQ people: 5.41%
- Most prefer LGBTQ people: 1.91%
+ Medical student CHANGES study

- 45.8% of respondents expressed some explicit bias against gay and lesbian individuals
  - Self-reported with a feelings thermometer
- 81.5% of respondents expressed some implicit bias against gay and lesbian individuals using the IAT
  - 74.3% of those who did not express explicit bias demonstrated implicit bias
- Greatest predictor of implicit attitude was amount and quality/favorability of contact with gay and lesbian individuals

+ How can we improve physician cultural competence in caring for LGBTQ patients?

- Education
  - Oregon Providence Family Medicine Residency Program created a “Caring for LGBTQ Patients” curriculum
  - Bias awareness
  - Defining terms
  - Discussing barriers to care and health disparities
  - Establishing empathy

+ How can we improve our clinics in caring for LGBTQ patients?

- Creating a welcoming and open practice
  - Small symbols (rainbow flag, equal symbol)
  - Inclusive forms/intake process
  - Don’t assume someone is cisgender/heterosexual
  - Have a non-discrimination statement
  - Register with glma.org or other provider referral programs.
Conclusions

- Bias, both implicit and explicit, exists in the world and in the medical field
- Bias can impact the way physicians practice medicine
- LGBTQ patients suffer from healthcare disparities
- Being aware of our own beliefs and biases may help improve rapport and relationships with patients
- There is a room for improvement in medical school and residency education surrounding LGBT healthcare

Resources

- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
- https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/