

Title

A Comparison of the Attitude of LGBTQ+ People and Healthcare Students to the Language Used in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Abstract

Background: Around 262,000 people living England and Wales do not identify with their sex assigned at birth (1). Despite this, there is limited knowledge about transgender and non-binary identities within healthcare. This lack of knowledge creates barriers to transgender and non-binary individuals when accessing healthcare, resulting in avoidance behaviours and delayed treatment. One of the areas where this is most predominant is Obstetrics and Gynaecology, with the space and information largely geared towards the cisgender heterosexual female population.

Aims and Objectives: We aimed to gain an understanding of the barriers that LGBTQ+ people face when accessing medical care, namely focusing on Obstetrics and Gynaecology. We also wanted to determine what terminology is generally accepted by people by comparing the results of both healthcare students, transgender and non-binary people, and the wider LGBTQ+ population.

Methods: Data was collected from 139 participants through an online 10-minute survey on Microsoft forms, with participants recruited through the Cardiff University HEAL society, MedSoc, and charities such as Trans Masculine Support & Advice UK (TMSA-UK) and TransActual UK.

Results: 90% (n=79) of transgender individuals reported being misgendered, and many of these delay care (80%), put off screening (57%), and experience dysphoria (81%) because of attending the Hospital or GP. 66% of people who attended felt the Obstetrics and Gynaecology team did not use inclusive language, and 87% of transgender people felt anxious or uncomfortable attending due to their gender identity. To overcome this, both LGBTQ+ people and Healthcare Students agreed with asking for pronouns and disagreed with the terms “Women’s Health” and “Mother” for all patients. In addition, all groups stressed the importance of education.

Conclusion: To address the gaps faced by LGBTQ+ people while accessing Obstetrics and Gynaecology, healthcare providers should be educated on inclusive language and healthcare disparities starting as early as possible.

References

1. Roskams, M. 2023 Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021> (Accessed 13 March 2023)

Authors

Mr William John

Corresponding author Presenting author johnw3@cardiff.ac.uk 07549953582

Cardiff University

Dr Sarju Patel

patels2@cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff University

Ms Ellen-Marie Parker

parkere8@cardiff.ac.uk Cardiff University