

Heterosexual women better judges of orientation than lesbian women in study

May 5 2014

Previous research has proven the 'gaydar' to be a real phenomenon. Reliable predictions of sexual orientation have been made simply by hearing a voice or seeing a face. This article in *Cognition & Emotion* asks who has better gaydar? Lesbian women or straight? The expectation was that lesbians due to their experience of choosing partners would be more tuned in to others orientation. The authors conducted a study which revealed some thought-provoking insights into who has greater interpersonal sensitivity.

The study entailed a mixture of lesbian and straight [women](#) watching video clips of a target group of women discussing family relationships and future life. The watchers were asked to rate multiple aspects of the target group; what were they thinking? What emotions they experienced? What type of personality did they have and overall were they gay or straight on a continuous scale of homosexuality? This ground-breaking research stands out from previous studies which have primarily considered sexuality of men. Thoughts, emotions and personality gave fascinating extra dimension.

Contrary to expectation, it was observed that straight judges were more accurate assessors of thoughts and emotions. Could lesbians be easier to read due to non-verbal communication? Lesbians won out in terms of gaydar, they spotted their own orientation more easily. Does the prominence of sexuality for lesbians enable a fine-tuned awareness of others sexuality? Straight women appear more interested in thoughts and emotions: sexuality of other women seems to bear less importance for

them. This insightful article has given us a snapshot of how [sexual orientation](#) guides perceptions of multiple aspects of other individuals. The authors urge more research on gay vs. straight communication methods and on how city vs. rural location affects outcomes.

More information: "How women's sexual orientation guides accuracy of interpersonal judgements of other women," Mollie A. Ruben, Krista M. Hill & Judith A. Hall, *Cognition & Emotion*, 10.1080/02699931.2014.890093

Provided by Taylor & Francis

Citation: Heterosexual women better judges of orientation than lesbian women in study (2014, May 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-05-heterosexual-women-lesbian.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
