

Patient-centered approach to collect sexual orientation and gender ID information studied

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Routine documentation of sexual orientation and gender identity (SO/GI) information in health care settings is essential for a complete understanding of the health status and needs of individual patients, but, a standard method for routinely collecting the data has not been implemented, and patient preferences regarding collection of this information have not been previously studied. In new research to be presented at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, BWH researchers will discuss findings from the EQUALITY Study which seeks to identify the best patient-centered approach to collecting SO/GI demographic data in the Emergency Department (ED).

"We looked at what the barriers might be to collecting SO/GI data in emergency departments to evaluate disparities in care experienced by sexual minorities, and found that while ED providers may feel uncomfortable about collecting sexual orientation information from their [patients](#), patients are willing to provide it. The study also found that non-verbal self-reporting was the preferred method among both patient and provider respondents," said Adil Haider, MD, Kessler Director of the Center for Surgery and Public Health. Researchers found that while 80 percent of ED providers expressed concerns about offending patients when inquiring about [sexual orientation](#) information, only 11 percent of patients asked indicated that they would be offended by a question about their SO/GI.

The EQUALITY Study is a three-phase multi-site matched cohort study including qualitative data from patients and providers to assess the barriers, facilitators, and preferred approaches to SO/GI collection, develop and prioritize patient-centered approaches to collecting this data, and evaluate specific methods for collecting SO/GI demographic data in the ED setting.

During a session at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting on June 28, Haider and colleagues will describe results from the first two study phases, which include how patient feedback was incorporated, a comparison of patient and provider responses, and how these findings will contribute to the third and final study phase. Researchers will also discuss how collection of SO/GI data will be implemented in the ED at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"As a site for acute unscheduled care visits and care providers who are new to the patient, the ED is as an important location for collection of SO/GI data," Haider said.

BWH researchers are planning additional studies to further investigate the specific methods in collecting SO/GI data and what implications the data might have on care moving forward.

Provided by Brigham and Women's Hospital

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