

# Clinicians' personal religious beliefs may impact treatment provided to patients who are homosexual

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In a report presented at CHEST 2017, researchers from the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas, sought to determine if a clinician's own religious beliefs could influence the care of a homosexual patient.

An anonymous 30-question [survey](#) was conducted from July 2015 to February 2016 with health-care providers in 174 different institutions in 40 different countries. The survey asked questions about [religious beliefs](#) and approach toward patients who identified as homosexual.

Physicians, nurses, medical students, and nursing students completed 10,106 surveys. When answering the question "how do your beliefs about homosexuality affect the care you provide to a patient who is homosexual?" 10.3% of non-Christian health-care providers would approach patients differently based on their sexual orientation. 20% of non-Christian/non-Catholic health-care providers and 16.6% of Christian/Catholic providers did not feel prepared to provide care to homosexual patients. Clinicians who identified as practicing Jehovah's Witnesses and Hinduism were more likely to treat homosexual patients differently based on their personal beliefs about homosexuality.

"In our study, a clinician's religious beliefs seem to have an impact in the medical management of homosexual patients," says lead researcher Dr. Joseph Varon, "health-care providers must be committed to implement an equal and decent care to patients respecting their sexual preference,

and training and education must be provided, so clinicians feel comfortable addressing the health needs of patients identifying as homosexual.

"Further results from these two studies will be shared at CHEST Annual Meeting 2017 in Toronto on Wednesday, November 1, 1:30 PM-2:30 PM at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Exhibit Hall, Poster Number 104. The study abstracts can be viewed on the journal *CHEST* website.

**More information:** Ismael Garcia et al, Religion as a Factor When Treating Homosexual Patients: Results of a Large International Multi-Center Study, *Chest* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chest.2017.08.868](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chest.2017.08.868)

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