

Researchers describe need for health systems to improve care of gender non-binary patients

January 7 2019

A perspective piece authored by UMN Medical School researchers and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* uncovers significant healthcare disparities for individuals who identify as neither male nor female or may not identify as having a gender.

The article *Persons of Nonbinary Gender—Awareness, Visibility, and Health Disparities* states 19 percent of non-binary patients have been refused [medical treatment](#) because of their [gender identity](#) and in the past year, 23 percent of these individuals have avoided [medical care](#) because of fear of discrimination.

"Our findings really highlight that there's a lot of skepticism and hesitancy around nonbinary and gender nonconforming patients to engage with [healthcare professionals](#)," said Walter Liszewski, MD, University of Minnesota Medical School Dermatology Resident and the author of the article.

In addition, the article highlights the fact that nonbinary individuals tend to have numerous health disparities compared to patients who do not identify as non-binary. Those disparities include higher rates of psychological stress, higher rates of domestic abuse, higher rates of poverty and higher rates of unemployment

Liszewski says these issues are further compounded by the fact that

many individuals have been discriminated against in the healthcare setting.

"The [medical literature](#) in the medical communities is not keeping up to date with society. My hope is that physicians who read the article will become aware of nonbinary patients, and realize we need to do a better job of allowing these individuals to access quality healthcare."

Liszewski says this is the first piece of literature that addresses these issues and he hopes it leads to awareness and the beginning of a change in healthcare. You can read the article [here](#).

More information: Walter Liszewski et al. Persons of Nonbinary Gender—Awareness, Visibility, and Health Disparities, *New England Journal of Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp1812005](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp1812005)

Provided by University of Minnesota

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