

90% of patients OK disclosing sexual orientation to physicians

Mackenzie Bean - Wednesday, April 26th, 2017 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

Patients are more willing to share their sexual orientation during a consultation than physicians assume, according to a new study published in [JAMA Internal Network](#).

For the study, researchers assessed patients' willingness to disclose their sexual orientation in the emergency department, along with the preferred method of collecting such information. They interviewed 53 patients and 26 clinicians in the greater Washington, D.C. area. Researchers also polled 429 ED clinicians, 804 straight participants and 712 lesbian, gay or bisexual participants through a national survey.

While survey results showed 78 percent of clinicians thought patients would not want to share their sexual orientation, 90 percent of patient respondents said they would be willing to provide the information.

During the interviews, researchers found most patients felt sexual orientation is always relevant when seeking treatment at the ED. Clinicians believed they should only ask about sexual orientation when medically relevant.

"They don't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable or weird. So they think patients are not going to want to answer this question," lead author Adil Haider, MD, of Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, told [Reuters](#). "Meanwhile, the patients are saying 'just ask us,' but you need to ask everybody."

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