

**National Center for Medical Education Development and Research (NCMEDR)
Meharry Medical College AU-PCTE
Research Policy Brief: Affirming Care**

Title: A Systematic Review of Medical Education Efforts to Provide Affirming Care

I. Executive Summary/Key Points

Individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/queer (LGBTQ) and/or born with differences of sexual development have specific health needs from their healthcare providers (Sawning, 2017). One specific necessity from this particular patient population is gender affirming care. Research has shown that current physicians, regardless of their specialty, need more training on providing affirming care to persons who are LGBTQ. This is evident in fields such as endocrinology, obstetrics/gynecology, and emergency medicine (Chisolm-Straker, 2018, Davidge-Pitts, 2018). This is also true for medical students who have not started practicing as physicians in the healthcare workforce. While medical schools and residency programs are implementing individual educational interventions to address the lack of knowledge among current and future physicians (Braun, 2017), there is currently no standard curriculum for affirming care in United States medical schools or residency training programs.

II. Issue

There are very limited structured teaching models to teach medical students as well as resident physicians on how to properly address the affirming care needs of LGBTQ patients.

III. Background

Research has shown that physicians lack the knowledge to properly treat patients who are LGBTQ with gender affirming care. In particular, physicians have mentioned some difficulty with transgender patients and assisting them with hormone therapy (MacKinnon, 2020). Medical students have also expressed a lack of knowledge in treating LGBTQ patients and would prefer more structured training.

IV. Methods

A systematic review of the literature was conducted using the 2009 PRISMA guidelines to identify original studies that focused on teaching medical students and resident physicians how to address affirming care for LGBTQ patients. An electronic search was conducted in PubMed, PsycINFO, Web of Science, Scopus, OVID, CINAHL and Google Scholar databases for articles in English. The search strategy cross-referenced keywords for curriculum, medical education and persons who identify as LGBTQ.

V. Results/Key Findings

There are few educational efforts to educate current and future physicians on methods to provide affirming gender care for persons who identify as LGBTQ. Strategies included lectures,

online modules, 1-day workshops, and patient simulation in conjunction with a pre- and post-test survey to assess the effectiveness of the educational intervention.

VI. Recommendation/Next Steps

The recommendation is to develop a standardized medical school curriculum that incorporates gender affirming care and culturally-competent care for persons who identify as LGBTQ. A curriculum of this nature will not only help increase physician knowledge and patient satisfaction, it will also help decrease health disparities among this vulnerable population.

VII. Limitations

Affirming care for people who identify as LGBTQ is regularly evolving in regards to medical care. This constant change makes it even harder to develop an appropriate and timely curriculum for practicing and future physicians.

VII. References

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