

Overcoming barriers to sexual healthcare for bisexual adolescent girls

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Bisexual teenage girls are likely to miss out on the sexual healthcare information and services they need if healthcare providers present judgmental attitudes and assume patients' heterosexuality. Concerns regarding providers' disclosure of confidential information when speaking to parents and bisexual stigma within families are other important factors that can keep adolescent girls from openly discussing their sexuality in the healthcare setting, according to a new study published in *LGBT Health*.

In the article "Bisexual Invisibility and the Sexual Health Needs of Adolescent Girls," Miriam Arbeit, PhD and Celia Fisher, PhD, Fordham University (New York, NY) and Kathryn Macapagal, PhD and Brian Mustanski, PhD, Northwestern University (Chicago, IL) examined how bisexual girls' perceptions of [healthcare providers'](#) attitudes and behaviors, social stigmas within families, and [sexual health](#) education provided in schools could affect their access to sexual health services and information.

The researchers concluded that the girls wanted their providers to be open and nonjudgmental and that they were willing to speak with providers about their sexual orientation but were unlikely to initiate the conversation. The authors emphasize the importance of primary care providers asking adolescent girls about sexual attraction, behavior, and identity, and taking advantage of opportunities to talk about sexual healthcare, educate patients, and test for HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

"Relative to other sexual minority groups, little attention has been paid to supporting bisexual girls' sexual health. Knowledge of a patient's sexuality is essential to the biopsychosocial model of clinical practice," says *LGBT Health* Editor-in-Chief William Byne, MD, PhD, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY.

"Practitioners will find the authors' tabulated

recommendations for conducting clinical interviews with [adolescent girls](#) particularly useful for supporting disclosure of their sexuality."

More information: Miriam R. Arbeit et al. Bisexual Invisibility and the Sexual Health Needs of Adolescent Girls, *LGBT Health* (2016). [DOI: 10.1089/lgbt.2016.0035](#)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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