

# Just ask: Documenting sexual orientation and gender identity among transgender patients

May 30 2017

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Transgender patients feel it is more important for health care providers to know their gender identity (GI) than their sexual orientation (SI), but are willing to disclose SO/GI in general. That is the primary finding of a [study](#) to be published in the June 2017 issue of *Academic Emergency Medicine (AEM)*, a journal of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine.

The study, led by Dr. Allysha C. Maragh-Bass is one of the first to recruit a national sample of transgender patient views and explore their views on collecting routine [sexual orientation](#) and [gender identity](#) in [health care](#) settings.

The study's results also suggest that routine sexual orientation and gender identity collection and documentation can facilitate actionable changes to the health care setting, which may improve retention in care among transgender individuals. Additionally, providing an LGBT-friendly environment by educating providers in LGBT health and ensuring patients feel safe may increase willingness to disclose SO/GI and increase quality of care for these patients.

"Our small study and its findings do not represent the views of all transgender patients. Nonetheless, we found strong willingness to discuss SO/GI among a group that are often excluded from health care research. Notably, patients stated that SO/GI should be routinely asked of all

patients, in a safe and respectful environment. These findings represent an important first step toward informing national standards and best practices for gender identity and sexual orientation collection in health care settings," said Dr. Maragh-Bass, who conducted this work as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Surgery and Public Health at Brigham and Women's Hospital, in the Harvard School of Medicine.

Provided by Society for Academic Emergency Medicine

Citation: Just ask: Documenting sexual orientation and gender identity among transgender patients (2017, May 30) retrieved 5 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-documenting-sexual-gender-identity-transgender.html>

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