

Underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ in mental health research

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The **LGBTQ+ community** faces **higher risks and percentages of mental health issues** due to discrimination and social pressure.^{1,2} The diversity of this community remains **underrepresented** in mental health studies due to the fact that research has primarily focused on young, white gay people and the Global North.^{3,4} Therefore, this needs to **change!**

History in the Global North⁵



12th century

LGBTQ+ people are seen as **unnatural** and **sinful**



19th century

Start of studying homosexuality, it is seen as a **mental disease**



20th century

It is believed homosexuality can be **treated with therapy**



1987

Homosexuality is **removed from DSM** (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)



Nowadays

More **acceptance** towards LGBTQ+, but this still varies across cultures

Global differences



Both the history and current situation vary among different cultures.

- **Western Countries:** Improving acceptance and representation of LGBTQ+ people⁵
- **Africa and Northern Asia:** Low acceptance, influenced by economy and religion⁶
- **Colonial-Era Laws:** Public health discourse dominates, supported by laws against same-sex sexuality⁷
- **Islamic Cultures:** Stigmatisation of queer identities and behaviours among Muslims⁸

Consequences

This situation has impact on both mental health research and society.

- **Gap in knowledge** regarding the breadth and diversity of experiences **within LGBTQ+ communities**³
- **Barrier** for seeking mental health support: fear of misunderstanding and -treating⁹
- **Misdiagnosis & unequal treatment** in mental health care¹⁰
- **Gap in training, knowledge and understanding** of healthcare providers¹⁰

Solutions

Creating awareness of the underrepresentation of the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community

Encouraging **more acceptance** and **more research** within less supporting cultures

Removing the barrier for seeking mental health support

Education and training for healthcare providers and society



References

