Med Students Are Poorly Trained on LGBT Health

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Future doctors aren't learning much about the unique health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) patients. And by "much," we mean almost nothing. According to a survey in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, medical schools devote, on average, only five hours of their entire curriculum to teaching LGBT-related content. While scant formal research exists to guide doctors on the health needs of the LGBT community, studies show that depression, suicide, homelessness and violence—and possibly obesity and breast cancer—are more prevalent among LGBT folks. If up-and-coming doctors are not trained to talk about and treat these specialized needs during routine exams, LGBT people may feel neglected and may lose confidence in their doctors—all of which could lead to subpar health. With the U.S. health care system poised for an overhaul, we should ensure that medical professionals are properly armed to treat everyone in their waiting rooms.

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