I Don’t Like American Football. Does This Mean I’m Gay?

September 28, 2011 By Regan Hofmann

No.

It means I think grown men in head-to-toe Kevlar-esque suits doing full body slams and taking Gatorade baths is not as impressive to me as Australian rules football or rugby (which I played in college, for purposes of disclosure). And even if I were gay, I might like football--American, Australian Rules or otherwise. Or not...because love, ambivalence or hate of contact sports based on the chasing of pigskin does not a sexual orientation make.

But a new French mobile app sold on Google’s Android market called <<Mon fils est-il gay?>> or “Is my son gay?” would like to convince its users that a series of 20 questions (one of which is “Does your son like football?”) can establish a male child’s sexual orientation.

This is ridiculous.

The 20 questions posed by the app are pointless at best--at worst, they reflect an ill-informed, totally non-scientific, insensitive understanding of gay people (especially gay boys). The app asks mothers to consider these questions about their sons:

- Before he was born, did you wish for a girl?
- Has he ever been in a fight?
- Does he read the sports page in the newspaper?
- Is his best friend a girl?
- Does he like team sports?
- Is he modest?
- Is he a fan of divas (Madonna, Britney Spears)?
- Does he spend a long time in the bathroom?
- Does he have piercings in his tongue, nose or ears?

- Do you wonder about your son's sexual orientation?
- Are you divorced?
- Does he like musical comedies?
- Has he ever introduced you to a girlfriend?
- Is his father a very authoritarian person?
- Within your family, is the father absent at all?
- During his childhood, was he timid or discreet?
- Does he have a complicated relationship with his father?
- Does he take a long time to do his hair?
- Does he like to dress well: is he very careful when choosing his outfits and selecting brands?
- Does he like football?

Does this mean all my well-groomed male friends who refuse to punch people in the face, who read the financial section rather than the sports section, who enjoy a night out on Broadway, who are not ego maniacs and who are manly enough to sing Madonna with me out loud on a road trip are gay? Methinks not.By the way, why is it only about sons? Where are the daughters? And why aren't dads being asked to weigh in?

Here's an idea: if you really want to know if your child is gay, why don't you be a grown-up and ask them? And provide a safe and accepting space in which they can be honest with you.

Because if you're "worried" about your child's sexuality, you should know that numerous legitimate, scientific studies indicate children are far more likely to grow up healthy and strong and full of self-esteem if you accept them and support them.

As relayed in a piece on the Huffington Post, the "Is my son gay?" app's creator Christophe De Baran said, "The purpose of the application is to help mothers accept their sons' sexual orientation and [to show them] that it shouldn't be taken too seriously." "This application was designed with a light-hearted approach," De Baran wrote to Rue89. "It's not based on any scientific approach. It follows the principle that certain kinds of behavior, certain social and domestic contexts might sometimes be determinant or might reveal a hidden homosexuality, or might not."

Okay, so it's a joke? Not a scientifically viable tool to help parents better understand their children's sexuality? I see. Well, that doesn't make it any better. It makes it pointless and extra offensive.

Whenever I come across things like this app, I debate whether to perpetuate their existence and

give them free advertising by writing about them.

But since the app is not free (it costs approximately $2.69), I decided to take the chance of promoting it to help ensure its creators make as little money as possible.

The recent weeks have been watershed ones for the progression of LGBT rights. From the repeal of the dreadful “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” to New York State green lighting gay marriage (thank you Governor Cuomo!) to yesterday’s marking of National Gay Men’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, we’re seeing awareness and acceptance raised. The dumb app is the kind of thing that takes us backward. And it’s homophobic. Why is an app needed to help mothers understand their child’s sexual orientation? And homophobia is wrong (for all the obvious reasons)--and unhealthy. The link between homophobia and how it leads to poor mental and physical health among our LGBT brothers and sisters by driving them underground and away from health care is well established. Health care is a basic human right that should be granted to all.

The world needs a more universal and compassionate understanding of LGBT people and a commitment to offer all people equal rights, period. The world does not need moms relying on apps to discover their child’s true nature.

To sign a petition against the “Is my son gay?” app, visit allout.org (and while you’re there, sign up for all their efforts. They rock). Or, to flag the “gay son app” as inappropriate in the Android market, follow these tips. Or, send an email to: android-supprt@emmene-moi.com.

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