

## 'Born That Way' Theory

### 'The British Journal Of Psychiatry' Publishes Study On Mental Illnesses Of Gays And Bisexuals

"Rates and predictors of mental illness in gay men, lesbians and bisexual men and women," has just been published in a recent issue of the *The British Journal Of Psychiatry*.

The study surveyed the range of mental health problems faced by gays and bisexuals in England and Wales between September, 2000 and July, 2002. The surveyors interviewed 2,430 gays and bisexuals over the age of 16 years.

The study found that compared with bisexual men and women, gay men and lesbians had significantly higher levels of same-sex attraction, fantasy and sexual experience  
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and were more comfortable with their **sexuality**.

It also found that of the 1249 who responded to questions about experiencing acts of hostility or **discrimination**, 83% reported having experienced property **damage**, personal attacks, verbal insults during the past **five years** or bullying at school.

In addition, the study found high rates of **planned** or actual deliberate self-harm [suicide] and **high levels** of psychiatric morbidity (42% of gay men; 43% of **lesbians**; 49% of bisexual men and women).

Table 2 of the report listed statistics on how many gays and bisexuals were attracted to members of the opposite sex or had sexual experiences with members of the opposite sex.

The statistics indicated that among gay males, 5% were predominantly attracted to the opposite sex; while 3% of lesbians were predominantly attracted to males. Eight percent of gay males had also experienced intercourse with both sexes equally or the opposite sex; and 26% of the lesbians had engaged in sex with males and females equally or with the opposite sex.

Dr. John R. Diggs, Jr., author of *The Health Risks Of Gay Sex*, has looked at these statistics and asked the question: "If 26% of lesbians said they had sexual experiences primarily with men or both sexes equally, why are they called lesbians?"

Dr. Diggs questions how the researchers determined their definitions for gay, lesbian, or bisexual, especially the term "bisexual, since most so-called gays and lesbians are, in fact, bisexual."

The study found that gay men were also more likely than bisexual men to have used drugs in the previous month. Diggs observes that "High rates of drug use likely expose one to higher rates of violence."

The report concludes with the observation that younger gay, lesbian and bisexual men and women "were more at risk of exposure to acts of discrimination or hostility, and gay men and bisexual men and women under 40 years old were at higher risk of mental disorder, harmful drinking and deliberate self-harm than older men. Our findings support the need for strategies that raise awareness of the vulnerability of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals to psychological distress and self-harm."

Dr. Diggs, an African-American physician, disputes this conclusion: "The link between discrimination and psychological dysfunction is tenuous. For decades, black folks have been subject to discrimination but have had lower rates of suicidality in the U.S [than whites]. It has risen since the 1960s but is still lower than the white population."

NARTH Scientific Advisory Committee member Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, observes of this study: "Here we have a typically politically correct conclusion. Unfortunately, the literature is ignored on the morbidity associated with a lifestyle in which rampant promiscuity, inability to maintain commitments, substance abuse, physical abuse and narcissistic use of others are the norm, as well as significant childhood and adolescent sadness and insecurity."

#### **American Study From 2003 Found Same General Results**

The authors of *The British Journal Of Psychiatry* study referenced a 2003 study published by Susan Cochran, J. Greer Sullivan and Vickie Mays in the *Journal Of Consulting And*

*Clinical Psychology*, (Vol. 71, No. 1, 53-61).

In the Cochran study, researchers surveyed the use of mental health services by gays, lesbians and bisexuals in the U.S.

The study found the following:

Gay men and bisexual men were more likely than heterosexual men to be diagnosed with at least one of five mental health disorders and 20% of gay-bisexual men were comorbid with two or more disorders.

Lesbian-bisexual women were more likely than heterosexual women to report mental health-related problems in the year prior to being interviewed. 24% of the lesbian-bisexual women were comorbid for two or more mental disorders in the previous year.

The authors conclude that "minority sexual orientation" is a risk factor for mental disorders and the use of mental health services. Why? "The cause for this is not known; however, there is reasoned sense that it might be related to the effects of social stigma surrounding homosexuality or the subtle ways in which the lives of lesbians and gay men differ from those of heterosexual women and men."

In a study on lifetime suicidality among gay males, published in 2000 in the *American Journal Of Public Health*, Cochran and Mays observe that "early identification of oneself as homosexual may be correlated with higher rates of psychological distress."

They also observe: "This current study also suggests that men with lifetime histories of same-sex, sexual partners may well be at somewhat higher risk for a lifetime diagnosis of major affective disorder than exclusively heterosexually experienced men, although the small sample size is an important limitation on our ability to detect such differences."

#### **References**

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