

Understanding LGBTQ+ Athletic Healthcare: Athletes, Athletic Trainers, and Their Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) athletic trainers face an unknown level of acceptance in the workplace. The purpose of this investigation was to explore how LGBTQ+ athletic trainers are perceived by NCAA Division II student-athletes from the University of Findlay. By focusing on the perceptions of student-athletes at a Midwestern, conservative, primarily white, private institution, can help begin to give a picture of these perceptions. The results from this investigation will be discussed and whether student-athletes believe there is a difference between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual athletic trainers.

INTERVENTIONS

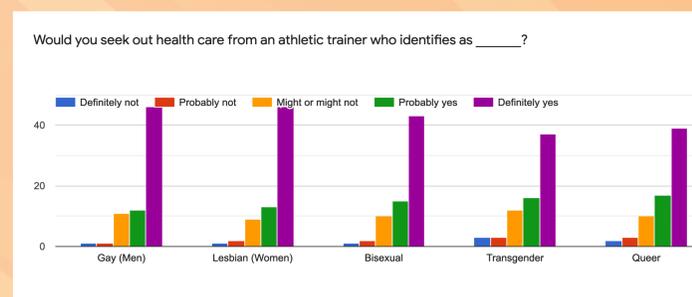
A 14-question survey instrument was used to investigate student-athletes' perceptions in regards to appropriateness of, quality of care from, and comfort level with athletic trainers who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. The survey was adapted from a survey that was used in a similar study, with permission granted from the authors.¹

CASE DESCRIPTION

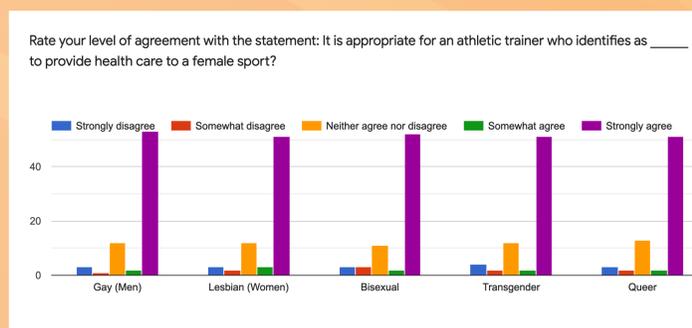
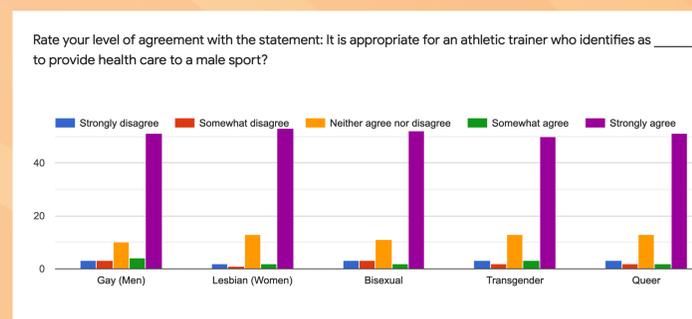
71 participants completed a 14-question survey to determine their perceptions about the care that LGBTQ+ athletic trainers provide. The questions included demographic questions, without specific identifiers, questions that asked their past experience with LGBTQ+ individuals, matrix questions that assessed the level of appropriateness, quality of care, and the level of comfort perceived by student-athletes of athletic trainers who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. There were also two open ended questions that allowed the student-athletes to provide an explanation of their answers in the questions.

RESULTS

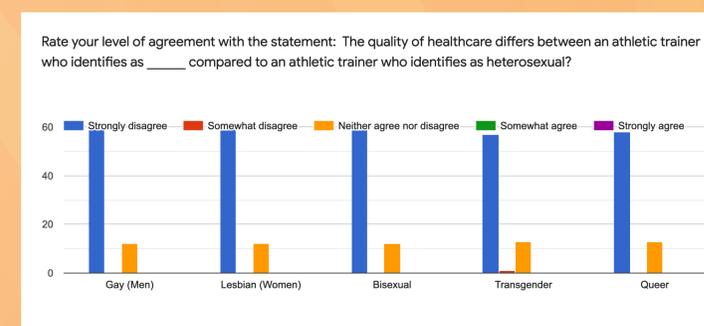
Participants indicated that they would seek health care and would be comfortable with an athletic trainer that is a member of the LGBTQ+ community.



Participants agreed that it is appropriate for an athletic trainer that is a member of the LGBTQ+ community to work with both male and female sports.



Participants also agreed that the quality of care does not differ between an athletic trainer that identifies as LGBTQ+ compared to an athletic trainer who identifies as heterosexual.



The responses to the open-ended questions revealed common themes: not knowing enough about specific populations, education, situational concerns, and professionalism that affected their perceptions.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the student-athletes at the University of Findlay had positive perceptions of working with athletic trainers that are members of the LGBTQ+ community.

REFERENCE

1. Crossway A, Rogers SM, Nye EA, Games KE, Eberman LE. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Athletic Trainers: Collegiate Student-Athletes' Perceptions. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 2018;54(3):324-333.