

LGBTQ+ individuals have lower levels of trust, respect, and comfortability with their oral health care providers

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Research Objective

- To examine the levels of trust, respect, and comfortability between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals towards their oral health care providers in the United States.

Study Design

- We reviewed data obtained from 10,922 individuals ages 18 and over from the nationally representative State of Oral Health Equity in America (SOHEA) survey designed by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health from January to February 2022, and January to February 2023. Respondents' gender identity was categorized based on self-report as LGBTQ+ or non-LGBTQ+. Chi square analyses examined differences between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ respondents based on sociodemographic variables.

Survey Questions

- How much do you agree with the following statements about your last oral health visit? *[My oral health provider respected me]*
- How much do you agree with the following statements about your last oral health visit? *[I trusted the oral health provider I saw]*
- How much do you agree with the following statements about your last oral health visit? *[My oral health provider tried to make me feel comfortable and at ease]*

Key Findings

Figure 1: Strongly agree to feeling respect, trust and comfortability with oral health care providers

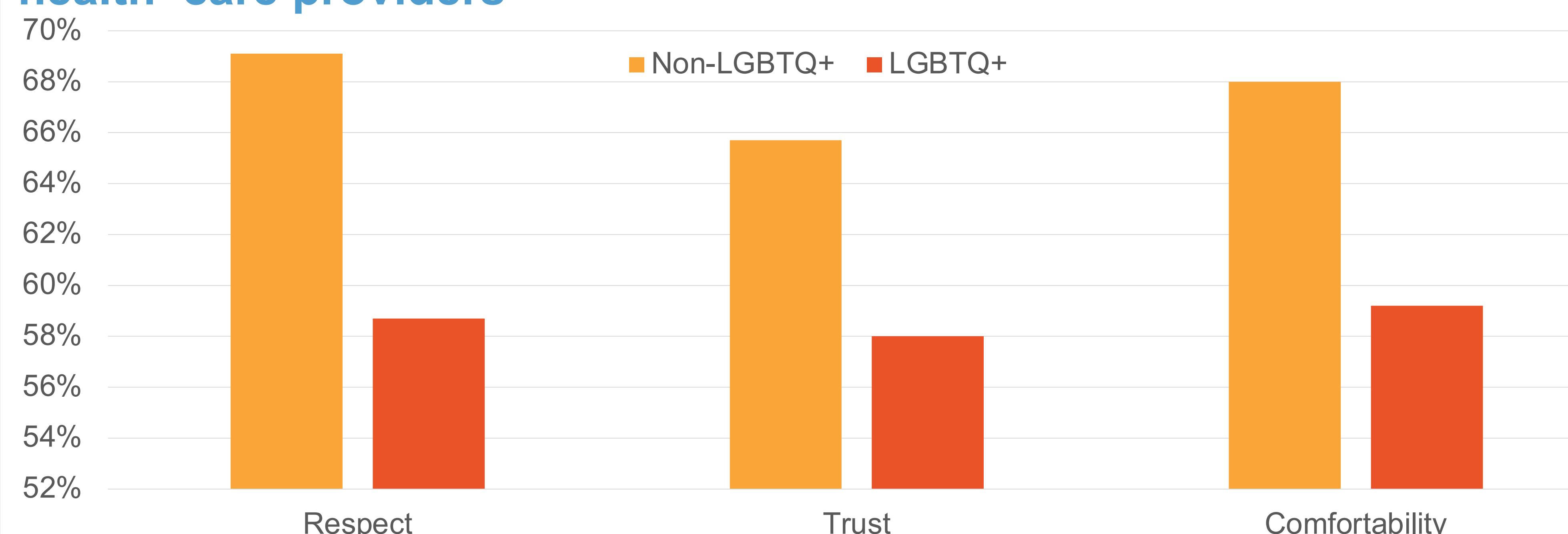


Table 1

Data	Overall n (%)	LGBTQ+ n (%)	Non-LGBTQ+ n (%)
Age			
18-24	1,245 (11.4)	298 (24.6)	947 (9.8)
25-34	1,928 (17.7)	344 (28.4)	1,584 (16.3)
35-44	1,835 (16.8)	201 (16.6)	1,634 (16.8)
45-54	1,556 (14.2)	122 (10.1)	1,434 (14.8)
55-64	1,950 (17.9)	135 (11.1)	1,815 (18.7)
65-74	1,641 (15.0)	81 (6.7)	1,560 (16.1)
75+	767 (7.0)	30 (2.5)	737 (7.6)
Respect			
Strongly agree	7,307 (68.0)	687 (58.7)	6,620 (69.1)
Somewhat agree	1,698 (15.8)	198 (16.9)	1,500 (15.7)
Neither agree or disagree	1,174 (10.9)	193 (16.5)	981 (10.2)
Somewhat disagree	221 (2.1)	45 (3.8)	176 (1.8)
Strongly disagree	136 (1.3)	26 (2.2)	110 (1.1)
Don't know	3 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.0)
Skipped	213 (2.0)	20 (1.7)	193 (2.0)
Trust			
Strongly agree	6,979 (64.9)	679 (58.0)	6,300 (65.7)
Somewhat agree	1,929 (17.9)	199 (17.0)	1,730 (18.1)
Neither agree or disagree	1,132 (10.5)	196 (16.7)	936 (9.8)
Somewhat disagree	337 (3.1)	58 (5.0)	279 (2.9)
Strongly disagree	157 (1.5)	19 (1.6)	138 (1.4)
Don't know	3 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.0)
Skipped	217 (2.0)	19 (1.6)	198 (2.1)
Comfortability			
Strongly agree	7,210 (67.1)	694 (59.2)	6,516 (68.0)
Somewhat agree	1,738 (16.2)	202 (17.2)	1,536 (16.0)
Neither agree or disagree	1,188 (11.0)	198 (16.9)	990 (10.3)
Somewhat disagree	232 (2.2)	36 (3.1)	196 (2.0)
Strongly disagree	164 (1.5)	22 (1.9)	142 (1.5)
Don't know	3 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.0)
Skipped	218 (2.0)	19 (1.6)	199 (2.1)

Principal Findings

- Eleven percent (n=1,210 of 10,922) of respondents self-identified as LGBTQ+. Compared to non-LGBTQ+ respondents, a smaller percentage of LGBTQ+ individuals strongly or somewhat agreed that they trusted the last oral health provider they saw (83.8% vs 75%, p<0.0001), their oral health provider tried to make them feel comfortable and at ease (84% vs. 76.4%, p<0.0001), and they felt respected by their oral health provider (84.8% vs. 75.6%, p<0.0001).

Implications For Policy and Practice

- Greater cultural competency training and education for dental providers is needed regarding care for the LGBTQ+ community.

Conclusion

- LGBTQ+ respondents reported lower levels of trust, respect, and comfortability with their oral health care providers than non-LGBTQ+ respondents. Oral health providers should be aware that individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ may experience these feelings during their oral health visits.

Resources

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