

Exploring and incorporating LGBTQ+ people’s needs in the sexual education curriculum

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Objective:LGBTQ+ individuals often face psychosocial challenges due to social stigma¹. Inclusive sexual education helps address these challenges, promoting well-being and fostering a supportive society. However, there is a significant research gap on the sexual education needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. This study aimed to explore the sexual care needs of queer youth in Greece.

Design: A cross-sectional study was conducted via an online 75-item questionnaire that consisted of six categories: Demographics & Gender, Sexual Education in Family, Sexual Education at School, Sources of Information, Experiences, and Identification of Needs.

Method: The questionnaire was shared on social media and with online community account administrators using the snowball sampling method. Inclusion criteria were: LGBTQ+ community membership, age 18-25, and Greek language proficiency. The questionnaire was viewed by 1,299 people, with 524 completing it (40.3% submission rate). After filtering and cleaning up of data, 492 responses were used.

Results: Most respondents were Greek (95%), 50% lived in Athens, and 72% were aged 18-20. 79% were undergraduate students, and 79% were AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth). 52% identified as women (51% cis, 1% trans), 26% as non-binary, 20% as men (15% cis, 5% trans), and 2% as agender. Sexual orientations were 66% bisexual, 24% gay, 16% asexual, 5% aromantic, and 3% heterosexual. 84% preferred monogamy. 48% hadn’t come out to their parents (Table 1), and 65.8% considered sexual health discussions with them as a "taboo" issue which decreased with age (p=0.02).

Concealed their identity from their parents	n	%
Homosexuals	41	34%
Bisexuals	173	53%
Asexuals	41	53%
Aromantic	16	64%
Trans women	3	60%
Trans men	7	28%
Non- binary	61	44%

Where do LGBTQ+ find information about their sexual health	n	%
Internet	453	92%
Friends	358	73%
Gynecologist/ andrologist	141	29%
Family members	67	14%
GP	25	5%
School/ university	20	4%
Nurse/ midwife	17	3%
Health visitor	10	2%
other	9	2%

40% attended sexual education classes, 87% found it heteronormative, and only 11.8% felt it covered the use of protection for every type of sexual contact adequately. 87.4% believed sexual education should start before age 13. 92% used the internet for information, and 73% relied on peers, leading to 61% experiencing misinformation (Table 2). 73.8% hadn’t come out to healthcare providers, avoiding them due to their queer identities.

Gay participants felt their parents lacked knowledge on sexual health (p=0.04). Men trusted their healthcare providers more for personalized care based on their queer identities (p<0.001) and had a better understanding of STI prevention (p=0.04).

Key topics respondents wanted in school sexual education included "Sexual Abuse," "Sexuality and Gender Identity," and "Access to Sexual Health Providers."

Conclusions: Our study highlights gaps in Greece’s sexual education curriculum and reveals that LGBTQ+ youth often avoid disclosing their identity to parents or healthcare providers, limiting essential guidance. A fact commonly found in the literature². Our study, comes to add on previous findings³ proving that is crucial to include diverse sexuality and gender identities in the curriculum, guided by international standards and regular updates.

References:

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