

Reframing Assisted Human Reproduction: Experiences of LGBTQ people in Ontario

Lesley A. Tarasoff, MA

PhD Candidate, Dalla Lana School of Public Health,
University of Toronto

Team Member, Re:searching for LGBTQ Health,
Centre for Addiction & Mental Health

Doctoral Student Research Trainee, Schizophrenia Research
Centre for Addiction & Mental Health

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**LGBTQ
Parenting
Network**

A Program of *Sherbourne Health Centre*



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**Re:searching
FOR LGBTQ
HEALTH**

COMMUNITY • COLLABORATION • CHANGE

Background

- * Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit and queer (LGBTQ) people choose to parent.
- * The majority of LGBTQ people must rely on outside assistance to create their families, including adoption and assisted human reproduction (AHR) services.
- * It is against the law to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or marital status (Assisted Human Reproduction Act) and gender identity (Human Rights legislation of NWT, Manitoba and Ontario).

Research Questions

- * Are AHR services meeting the family creation needs of LGBTQ people in Ontario?
- * What are the barriers and facilitators to AHR service access for LGBTQ people in Ontario?

Methods

The Creating Our Families Research Project

ARE YOU LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, OR QUEER?
Have you used a fertility clinic or sperm bank in Ontario in the past three years?

- OR -

Have you considered using fertility clinics or sperm banks but didn't because you faced barriers or thought you might?

- Our goal is to learn about the experiences of LGBTQ people with assisted human reproduction services in Ontario.
- Participation includes a 1 hour interview.
- Compensation will be provided.
- Wheelchair accessible interview space, ASL available

For more information or to participate please contact us:

Phone: 1-866-371-6667 or (416) 535-8501 x 7384

E-mail: creating_families@camh.net



- * Community-based study
 - * Advisory Committee of service users and service providers
- * Recruitment: +110 LGBTQ people across Ontario
- * Sampling: Purposeful
- * Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews
- * Analysis: Thematic content analysis

Results – Participant Demographics

* 66 individuals interviewed (40 interviews in total)

Gender Identification	N (%)	Notes
Female (cisgender)	48 (72.7%)	
Male (cisgender)	9 (13.6%)	
Trans man/FTM spectrum	7 (10.6%)	
Trans woman/MTF spectrum	2 (3.0%)	
Sexual Orientation		
Lesbian	21 (31.8%)	-1 also identified as queer
Queer	18 (27.3%)	
Gay	11 (16.7%)	- 2 also identified as queer
Bisexual	11 (16.7%)	-1 also identified as queer/pansexual
Two-Spirit	1 (1.5%)	- also identified as bisexual
Straight	2 (3.0%)	- both identified as trans
Other	2 (3.0%)	- included: homoandrophilic, fluid/no label

Results – Participant Demographics

Cultural/Racial Background: 48 (72.7%) identified as **white**

Relationship Status: 57 (86.4%) identified as **legally married or common-law**

Highest Level of Education: 31 (47%) indicated **post-graduate**

Annual Household Income: 27 (40.9%) indicated **over \$100,000**

Number of Children: 28 (43.8%) had **1 child**

Age: 43 (65.1%) indicated **31-40 years old**

Region in Ontario	N (%)
Toronto	34 (51.5%)
Southwest	10 (15.1%)
Eastern	9 (13.6%)
North Eastern	4 (6.1%)
Hamilton/Niagara	3 (4.5%)
Central East	2 (3.0%)
Central West	2 (3.0%)
Northwest	2 (3.0%)

Results

- * Are AHR services meeting the family creation needs of LGBTQ people in Ontario? **Sometimes.**
- * The needs of some are better met than others:
 - * *Trans people, individuals wishing to use surrogacy, and individuals wishing to use a known sperm donor experience the greatest barriers to accessing AHR services in Ontario.*

Results

You have to break away from this idea that women have babies and men provide sperm. Because that's just not true actually a lot of the time. And, despite so much evidence to the contrary, we are clinging to that belief. And the entire clinic system and the assisted reproductive technology industry is based on that premise.

– Trans man who accessed AHR with his trans man partner in order to conceive

Results – Recommendations

- * Access to information about AHR services

There's not a lot [of LGBTQ family planning information] out there. I maybe didn't know where to look, but even books, like I was searching for books and I'm like, "Come on. There's got to be books there aside from lesbian sex books." [laughs]

– Lesbian whose partner conceived their child through anonymous donor insemination with the assistance of AHR services

- * AHR service provider practices
- * Education and training of AHR service providers
- * Clinic staffing and environment
- * Service gaps

Conclusions

- * LGBTQ service users defy assumptions commonly held within the AHR system, that is, the notion that those who access AHR services are heterosexual, cisgender (non-trans), partnered, and experiencing infertility.
- * Our study is the first of its kind to explore the experiences of the broader community of LGBTQ people, rather than focusing exclusively on sexual minority women.
- * The persistence of barriers to AHR services for LGBTQ people indicates the need for additional education and training of service providers in order to provide them with the tools necessary to deliver non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate care to LGBTQ clients.

