

Relationship problems, not family rejection, leading cause of higher gay suicides: study

By: Ben Johnson
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NATHAN, Queensland, Australia, May 30, 2014 (LifeSiteNews.com) – While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LGBTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.

Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex” (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.

“We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that’s not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners,” Dr. Skerrett said.

Image

In fact, he said, “The numbers are telling us there’s a general acceptance at the family level,” something he said is “great” and “really heartening!”

Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that “LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often” than heterosexuals, “with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases.”

That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.

The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives out of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports “there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals.” The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Peter Sprigg, senior fellow for policy studies at the Family Research Council, told LifeSiteNews that the study adds to the evidence that the causes of suicide and depression in the homosexual community are more complex than gay activists admit.

“Pro-homosexual activists have long given a single explanation for the high rates of physical and mental health problems among those who engage in homosexual relationships – they blame it on 'homophobia,' the 'stigma' which they suffer at the hands of society, and the 'rejection' they suffer from family members who disapprove of such conduct,” Sprigg said. “One recent example is Matthew Vines, author of a new book *God and the Gay Christian*, who alleges that for some 'gay Christians,' the call to abstain from homosexual conduct 'fuels despair to the point of suicide.’”

“Scientific research, however, has never supported this one-size-fits-all explanation for the serious pathologies experienced by homosexuals,” he said.

Dr. Skerrett remains focused on finding a societal cause for homosexuals' elevated depression and suicide rates, speculating in his conclusions that “LGBTI people are still facing stigma and a lack of acceptance at a societal level and that plays out in various ways in their lives, like relationship conflict. If your relationship seems less valid than that of your straight friends and family, your problems are less valid too, which means they’re not addressed.”

He has announced he will launch a second phase of his project, interviewing friends and family members of homosexual and transgender people who committed suicide. Skerrett has said he will ask surviving family members about their deceased loved ones, especially “about their possible internalized feelings of homophobia.”

Sprigg told LifeSiteNews, “I welcome this addition to the body of evidence refuting the myths about 'homophobia.' It’s just unfortunate that the researcher, Dr. Skerrett, seems to want to cling to this myth by now claiming that it is 'stigma' which prevents homosexuals from getting help for their relationship problems.”

Dr. Skerrett's study, “Suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations in Australia: An analysis of the Queensland Suicide Register,” may be read online.

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/homosexuals-more-likely-to-commit-suicide-due-to-problems-with-gay-lovers-t>