

A new guide to inclusive practice for lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women

Ruth McNair
Catherine Barrett
Meg Gulbin

Aust. Women's Health Conference May 2010



FACULTY OF
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

ministerial advisory committee
gay lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex health & wellbeing

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Acknowledgements

PhD study

- Kelsey Hegarty and Angela Taft – supervisors
- Participants

Ministerial Advisory Committee on GLBTI health and wellbeing

- Catherine Barrett – RA, and Meg Gulbin – EO
- Inclusive practice working group members
- Department of Human Services staff



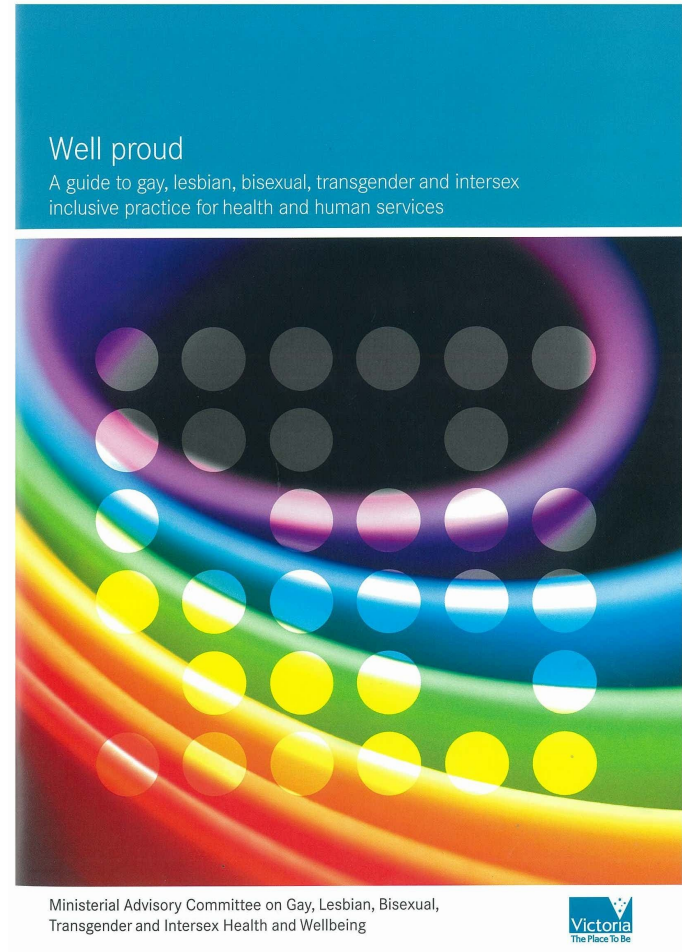
FACULTY OF
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

ministerial advisory committee
gay lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex health & wellbeing

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Outline

- Development of the guide
- Content
- Next steps



Sources of the guide

Dialog PhD Project - Aims



- To understand what constitutes an effective patient-doctor relationship between same sex attracted women and their usual GP
- To understand how this can be achieved

GLBTI MAC - Purposes

- Provide advice to promote and support the health of GLBTI Victorians
- Ensure optimal access to relevant mainstream and, where appropriate, specialist health services
- Use a social model of health

Background

There were no existing guidelines for the care of LB women in Australian clinical settings, and only related to sexual health for GB men (<http://stigma.net.au>)

But good evidence of:

- **Low levels of health care provider knowledge and skills**
(Westerstahl, 2002; Hinchliffe, 2005)
 - Little formal education and minimal experience
 - Lack of perceived relevance
 - Rarely ask about sexual orientation
- **Lower levels of satisfaction and continuity amongst sexual minority women compared with heterosexual women**
(McNair, In Press – ALSWH)
- **Significant health disparities**
(Tjepkema, 2008; Hunt, 2008)



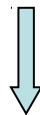
FACULTY OF
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

ministerial advisory committee
gay lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex health & wellbeing

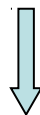
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Methods – PhD study component

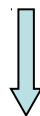
Systematic review of existing guidelines on GLB sensitive care and collation of recommendations



Appraisal of existing guidelines with two reviewers



In-depth interviews with LB women and GPs



Draft guidelines for GPs developed

Methods – GLBTI MAC component

Draft GP guidelines expanded and modified for
DHS-funded services



Consultations on the draft guide



Development of the final guide

Systematic literature review of existing LGB guidelines from Australia, NZ, UK, Republic of Ireland, Canada, USA

2,421 documents on initial search

30 documents fulfilled criteria for review

11 documents were rigorous enough to be fully appraised and the recommendations collated

Interviews

In-depth interviews with 33 same sex attracted (SSA) women, 27 GPs (24 woman-GP pairs), 1 psychiatrist

- Experiences of women seeing GPs/ GPs seeing SSA women
- Women's preferences and expectations for care/ GP styles
- Disclosure of sexual orientation – why, when, how, who, outcomes

Second interview with 12 GPs

- Feedback on draft GP guidelines

GP guidelines for sensitive care of lesbian and bisexual women

1. Principles underlying the guidelines
 - cultural sensitivity, patient-centredness, human rights
2. Creating an inclusive clinical environment
3. Sensitive doctor-patient communication
 - facilitating disclosure principles and example phrases
4. Documentation of sexual orientation
5. Specific health issues
6. Referral networks and resources

GP guidelines expanded & modified for DHS services

Added:

- recommendations for specific services
 - Mental health, drug and alcohol, housing, children and family, rural services, aged care, disability
- guide to issues for specific groups
 - Gay and bi men, lesbian and bi women, sex and gender diverse people
- accreditation information
- examples of inclusive practice
- expanded resource list



GLBTI MAC Consultations on DHS draft

Questions

- would the recommendations work for services
- is there anything missing
- should anything be deleted/changed
- what would be most difficult to implement

Participants

- 20 groups and individuals including:
- 8 DHS departments; health services- rural & urban, women's health service, family service,



FACULTY OF
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

ministerial advisory committee
gay lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex health & wellbeing

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Consultations - some of the concerns

- adding to existing multiple demands on services
- why not address other marginalised groups in the document
- too detailed versus not specific enough
- no need – services already doing it or services don't see GLBTI clients

Consultations - practical suggestions

- change from 'guidelines' to 'guide'
- gaps identified - rural, disability
- need to link guide with quality standards to encourage uptake
- use more quantifiable language
- link with an audit tool for services
- need to be accompanied by staff training

Content of the Guide - Principles

a) Cultural sensitivity and competence

- sexual orientation and gender identity as a cultural issue
- inclusive practice recognises distinct needs

b) Discrimination and its impact on health

c) Human rights

- to full participation and access to health services

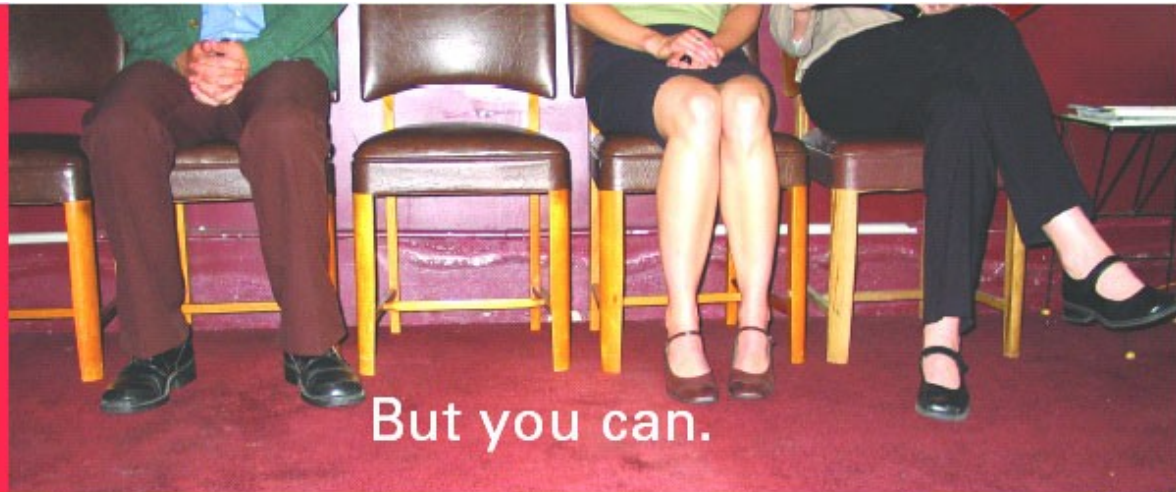
GLBTI inclusive and welcoming environment

- Overt signs
 - Rainbow sign, posters
 - GLB-specific health promotion materials
- Receptionist sensitivity
 - Language used, non-judgemental attitudes, confidentiality
- Intake forms
 - Optional self-identification on forms
- Policies and procedures
 - Visible anti-discrimination policy including sexual orientation
 - GLB staff protected within practice procedures



Waiting room posters- Gay & Lesbian Health Victoria

You don't
have to tell us
if you're
gay or lesbian.



But you can.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and their families are welcome at this service.

Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria is funded by the Department of Human Services and run by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, Women's Health Victoria and the Victorian AIDS Council. www.glhv.org.au



You don't
have to be
straight
to use this
service.



People who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or just not sure are welcome here.

Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria is funded by the Department of Human Services and run by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, Women's Health Victoria and the Victorian AIDS Council. www.glhv.org.au



Staff-client communication

- Using culturally aware **language**
- Acknowledging the role of same sex partner and/or chosen family
- Clarifying the **relevance**, if any, of sexual orientation to health and social networks
- Recognising that sexual orientation can **change** over time
- Recognising that sexual identity may not correlate with sexual attraction or behaviour
- Assuring **confidentiality** if required
- Facilitating disclosure of sexual orientation

Documentation - Intake form questions

Preferred contact for emergencies

(rather than next-of-kin)

Sexual orientation

Lesbian/gay

Bisexual

Same-sex attracted

Heterosexual

Other (please specify)

Relationship status

(rather than marital status)

Married

De facto

Same-sex partnered

Single

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

Documentation and referral

Medical notes

- Permission for documentation of sexual orientation or partner's name

Referral

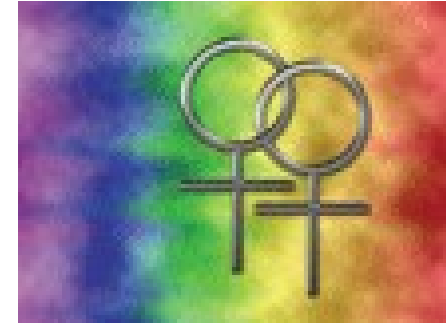
- Permission for disclosure in letters when relevant
- Explain relevance to patient

Support networks

- Do they prefer GLB-specific or mainstream services and supports

Issues for specific groups – lesbian and bisexual women

- sexual health
 - STI rates similar, higher rates BV, HSV 1
- pregnancy and families
- cancer risks
 - Higher rates of smoking, lower screening rates
 - ⇒ Higher risk breast, ovarian, possibly cervical cancer
- heart disease risks
- mental health



Issues for specific groups – transgender women

Transgender women

- some- fluid approach to gender
- lifelong need for oestrogen for some
- genital gender reassignment surgery
- age-appropriate prostate screening
- age-appropriate breast screening
- mental health problems association with transphobia



Issues for specific groups – intersex people



Intersex people

- early management of infants and children is complex
- careful consideration and parental consent before genital surgery, delay permanent treatments
- higher rates of osteoporosis, sexual dysfunction, mental health/body image issues
- need for hormone therapies

Referral networks and resources

- Build list of local GLB-specific services
 - Health, legal, welfare, support groups
- Knowledge of GLB-sensitive specialists for referral
- Information resources for GLB patients
 - Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria Clearinghouse:
www.glhv.org.au
 - e.g. Victoria - ALSO Directory for GLB sensitive service providers: www.also.org.au



Next steps for the guide

- Evaluation of the guide
- Development of a web-based version
 - Interactive
 - Podcasts
- Development of audit tools
 - e.g. aged care services
- Use in healthcare provider training
 - e.g. Mind the Gap project
- Piloting of GP guidelines prior to RACGP endorsement

Thank you

Meg Gulbin

EO GLBTI MAC

meg.gulbin@health.vic.gov.au

03 9096 8611

Ruth McNair

Chair GLBTI Mac

r.mcnair@unimelb.edu.au

03 8344 6077

www.health.vic.gov.au/glbtimeac



FACULTY OF
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

ministerial advisory committee
gay lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex health & wellbeing

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE