

Queer Student Experiences with Reproductive Health Care at UNC Campus Health

Elizabeth Morton

Queer (i.e., non-heterosexual) individuals face several barriers to accessible and high-quality reproductive health care, which includes gynecological services, birth control and contraception services, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, prevention, and treatment, and pregnancy care. This study explores queer undergraduate students' experiences seeking and receiving reproductive health care at UNC Health. Specifically, three questions are addressed. First, are queer students comfortable approaching and interacting with providers? Second, do queer students believe that providers provide LGBTQ competent care? Third, what images and language contribute to a welcoming environment for queer students? Undergraduate students who identify as queer or non-heterosexual were recruited to complete an anonymous online survey, and 47 participants submitted responses. Most participants agreed that reproductive health care providers at UNC Campus Health are approachable and LGBTQ-competent, as evaluated by Likert scales. 20-40% of participants reported that signs of LGBTQ equality and gender-neutral language cause them to feel more trust toward the setting, feel it is safer to disclose their sexual orientation, and view the setting as inclusive. Thematic analysis of open-ended question responses revealed that participants would feel more comfortable with reproductive health care if providers altered behaviors (e.g., used gender-neutral language and did not make assumptions about heterosexuality) and if there were increased resources, access to care, and LGBTQ and allied providers. Most participants who disclosed their sexual orientation to providers received neutral reactions, which was appreciated by participants. These findings can inform inclusive, queer-competent reproductive health care at UNC Campus Health and other college health centers.