

LGBTQ parents' experiences accessing health care for their children with disabilities

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Background

- An estimated **2-3 million U.S. children** under the age of 18 **have LGBTQ parents**.¹
- Approximately **1 in 6 U.S. children** has a **developmental disability**.²
- LGBTQ parents' experiences accessing health care for their children with developmental disabilities (DDs) in the U.S. remain unknown.
- Anti-LGBTQ health care **bias and discrimination may delay screening and diagnosis of DDs** and access to early interventions.

LGBTQ parents' voices:

"I think [anti-LGBTQ bias and discrimination] has been the primary force behind the way [our son was] evaluated [for developmental disabilities]. (Alice)

"Do I need to hide who I am so that I can get the best [health care] for my kids?" (Mona)

"... Do [clinicians believe] that there's something wrong with me or that I'm not a good parent? Does that affect what's happening? I worry about it, and I have for years." (Cassie)

"... doctors have been great, but **forms that are antiquated** don't account for families that are outside of the heterosexual norm." (Anthony)

Results

- **Several LGBTQ parents reported experiencing discrimination** when accessing care for their children with DDs.
- **Discrimination types:** non-inclusive forms, disclosure challenges, providers dismissing non-gestational parents and diverse families, being refused needed care.
- **Few parents reported screening and diagnosis delays.**
- **Parents recommended:** honoring family diversity, avoiding assumptions, increasing LGBTQ family support, improving forms, increasing anti-bias training.

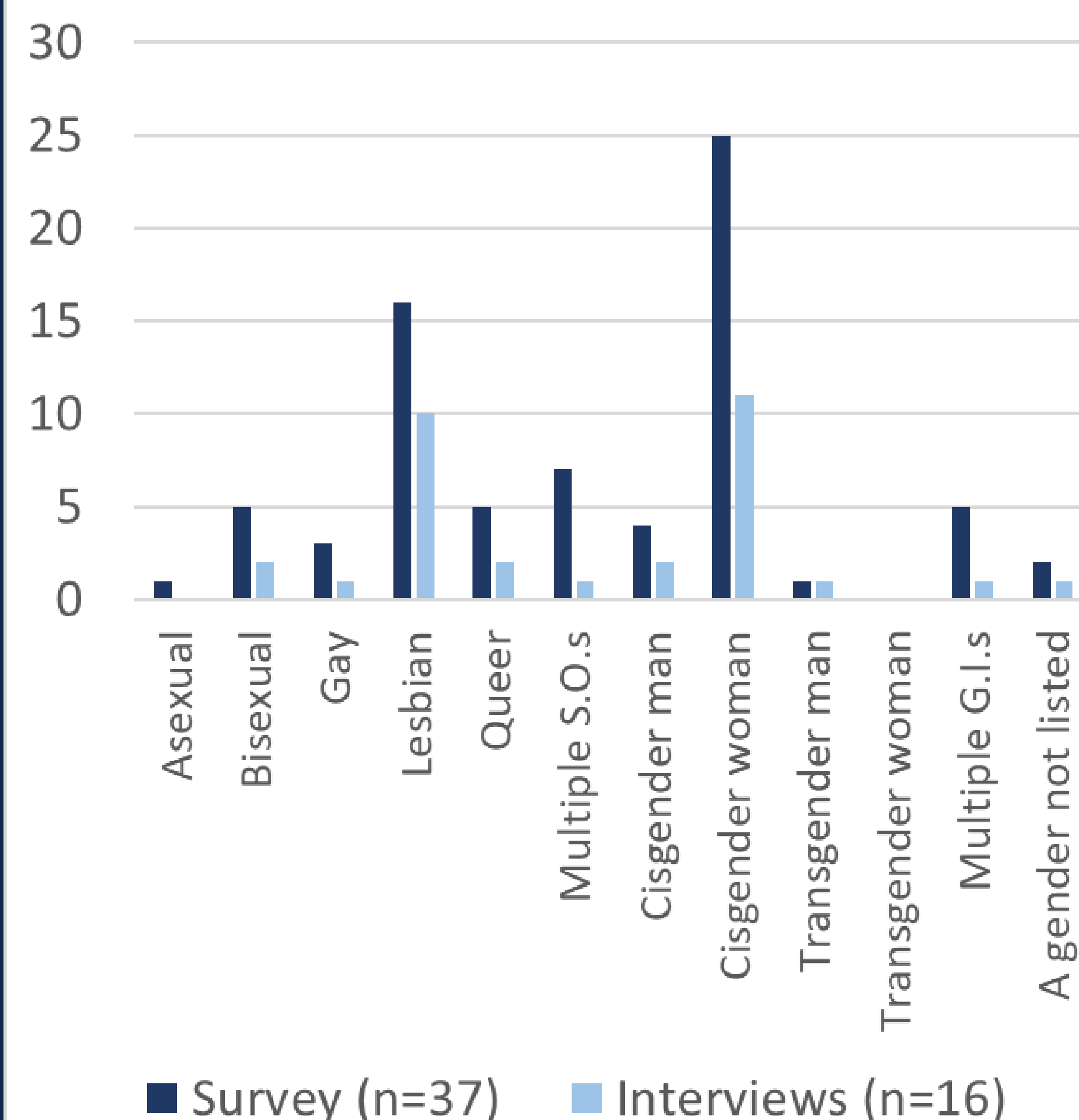
Methods

- **National online survey** of LGBTQ parents of children with DDs (March - June 2021).
- Descriptive statistics compiled.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with a subset of LGBTQ parents (September - October 2021).
- Interviews transcribed and analyzed with a combined inductive and deductive approach.

References:

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3. Coulter-Thompson, E. I. (2022). The Impact of Health Care Discrimination Against LGBTQ Parents on the Screening and Diagnosis of Their Children with Disabilities. ProQuest Dissertations. (28968399)
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Participant sexual orientation (S.O.) & gender identity (G.I.)



Conclusion & Implications

- **Further research is needed** to systematically measure health discrimination against LGBTQ parents of children with DDs.
- **Revise health care forms, electronic records, and materials to include LGBTQ families.**
- LGBTQ-specific **health professions education** and **workforce development** are needed.

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