


The Global Impact of Mpox on LGBTQIA+

American Journal of Men's Health
January-February 1
© The Author(s) 2023
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/15579883231156671
journals.sagepub.com/home/jmh


Jeff Clyde G. Corpuz¹ 

Dear Editor,

Even before COVID-19 pandemic, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, intersex, asexuals and other individuals with diverse sexualities and genders (LGBTQIA+) bore a disproportionate burden of mental health problems, with their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) being risk for factors for victimization, trauma, discrimination, and abuse. In an article published in the *American Journal of Men's Health*, Walsh and Stephenson (2021) noted that the combination of complex factors such as preexisting mental, physical, and social and the differential effects of the pandemic on sexual minorities makes gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) vulnerable to the substantial negative mental and physical consequences of the pandemic.

While addressing these problems, there is a need to also acknowledge the prevalence of discrimination against GBMSM in the context of emerging public health concerns such as the monkeypox (Mpox). Almost 40 years since the initial description of HIV in men who have had sex with men (MSM) in the United States, the global community faces another major concern. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mpox virus posed a threat to LGBTQIA+ since the majority of the cases have been found related to male-to-male sexual contact in particular, those who have multiple and often anonymous partners—met at spas, saunas, bars, sex clubs, and dating apps. While it is important to avoid any stigma and discrimination of the communities affected, the most affected groups—currently MSM—need to be involved in solutions for stopping its further spread, and not excluded. The World Health Organization (2022) warns the public that stigmatizing people because of a disease is never ethical. Anyone regardless of their sexuality can get or pass a disease. Viruses do not discriminate by race, by religion, or by sexual orientation.

As an activist, I am hereby proposing several steps to mitigate and eradicate the discrimination toward the LGBTQIA+ community. First, a human-rights approach provides an important framework for exploring organizational understandings of LGBTQIA+ and their needs in

relation to health and well-being, and health services access. Second, the use of gender-sensitive language is important. We need to go beyond the “tolerance” approach and move forward toward inclusion, respect, and acceptance (Corpuz, 2022). This approach is consistent with the World Health Organization’s (2021) *Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025* which calls for integrating a gender-based analysis into health and policy research with a goal of strengthening gender equality, equity, and inclusive approaches. We need to stop the cycle of violence, discrimination, stigma, and homophobia toward LGBTQIA+ people around the world. Stigma and discrimination are as dangerous as any virus.

ORCID iD

Jeff Clyde G. Corpuz  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1517-4866>

References

- Corpuz, J. C. G. (2022). Finding the common ground: Toward an inclusive approach to humanitarian crisis. *Journal of Public Health*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdac150>
- Walsh, A. R., & Stephenson, R. (2021). Positive and negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on relationship satisfaction in male couples. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 15(3), Article 15579883211022180.
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Global strategy on digital health 2020-2025*. <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/gs4dhdaa2a9f352b0445bafbc-79ca799dce4d.pdf>
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Perceptions of monkeypox from those most at risk: Men who have sex with men having multiple sexual partners*. <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/26-08-2022-perceptions-of-monkeypox-from-those-most-at-risk—men-who-have-sex-with-men-having-multiple-sexual-partners>

¹College of Liberal Arts, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Corresponding Author:

Jeff Clyde G. Corpuz, College of Liberal Arts, De La Salle University, Manila 1004, Philippines.
Email: jeff.corpuz@dlsu.edu.ph

