



## Letter

## Hungary's new anti-LGBTQ law: The medical profession must speak out about the harm it does to LGBTQ adolescents' health

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On 15 June 2021, the Hungarian Parliament adopted the “Act to take stricter action against paedophile offenders and to amend certain child protection laws” (the title of the act itself being an offence against LGBTQ persons), which soon thereafter became known worldwide as Hungary's new anti-LGBTQ law.

This new law states that minors must not have access to information about transsexuality and content which “promotes” homosexuality. Economic advertisements that show solidarity with the LGBTQ community (as was done, e.g., by Coca Cola in the past) are banned if they would be accessible to minors. Schools are prohibited from providing objective information about homosexuality or transsexuality to their students. TV content which displays transsexuality or “promotes” homosexuality must only be shown in adult programmes (after 10 pm).

The new anti-LGBTQ law has led to a loud outcry by politicians and the civil society in Hungary, Europe, and many other States, who have condemned the stigmatization and humiliation of LGBTQ persons by this law (see, e.g., [1]). This is, of course, an important perspective, keeping in mind the detrimental impact, especially an increase in discrimination and marginalisation, that this law is presumably going to have for the Hungarian LGBTQ community.

Public discourse has, however, so far omitted to draw the attention to the persons who are directly targeted and probably most affected by this new law: If this law remains in place, LGBTQ adolescents are doomed to grow up in a hostile environment, in which LGBTQ discrimination is normal, and which gives them little chance to access any non-discriminatory, objective, and positive information about LGBTQ.

LGBTQ discrimination is not only a violation of human rights, but it can also lead to serious negative health impacts. In the UK, the

Millennium Cohort Study has found drastically higher levels of high depressive symptoms (54.27 % in LGBTQ adolescents vs. 15.15 % in non-LGBTQ peers), self-harm (53.78 % vs. 14.20 %), and low life satisfaction (34.40 % vs. 10.15 %) in LGBTQ adolescents as compared to their non-LGBTQ peers [2]. Suicidal thoughts and behaviour are around three to four times more common in LGBTQ adolescents as compared to their non-LGBTQ peers [3,4]. Important protective factors against suicidal thoughts and behaviour are a supportive school and family environment, a sense of school belonging, and openness about LGBTQ adolescents' sexual or gender identity [5].

The medical profession must speak out about this and explain to the public the devastating health effects that Hungary's new anti-LGBTQ law is going to have for LGBTQ adolescents. This is even more important since the Hungarian Prime Minister has announced in response to the widespread international criticism that he will seek validation of the anti-LGBTQ law by referendum.

### Declaration of interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

### References

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