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The Quality of Online Sex and Health Information for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

Maranda Santoya

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The Quality of Online Sex and Health Information for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Student Researcher: Maranda Santoya

Faculty Advisors: Kimberly Fuller, Katherine Clonan-Roy, Elizabeth Goncy, and Shereen Naser

Abstract

Sexual and gender minority youth (SGMY) are exploring the internet and social media to answer questions about sex and health information. It is important to determine whether the information provided on online resources provides necessary and proper sex education for SGMY. The present content analysis will explore the online resources that SGMY use to learn about sexual health information and the opinions of SGMY on the quality and accuracy of the sources. Three semi-structured, in-person focus groups were conducted with 17 youth (aged 14-19) who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, or queer/questioning. The transcripts were coded and analyzed using an inductive approach. Common themes were identified across youth narratives. Analysis indicates that much of the information SGMY explore has been educational and relevant when searching for sexual health information; however, the youth mention that not all of the information is realistic, safe, or inclusive to their needs. Results indicate the need to create easily accessible and accurate resources on the internet for SGMY. To provide quality services to SGMY, social workers must be educated on the opportunities and risks of online resources and be able to connect youth to accurate and applicable online sex and health resources.

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