LGBTQ+ health research guides: A cross-institutional pilot study of usage patterns

Introduction
Multiple studies have recommended that health sciences libraries use research guides to promote LGBTQ+ health information, connect with their users and the community, and improve health equity. However, little is known about LGBTQ+ health guide usage patterns and whether such guides really meet the information needs of their users.

Based on usage patterns from LGBTQ+ health research guides, we planned on assessing the types of LGBTQ+ health information of greatest interest to health sciences library users and how, if appropriate, these guides might be revised to be more relevant to user needs.

Methods
- Data for LGBTQ+ health research guides of five health sciences libraries were studied
- Usage data retrieved for a three year period (July 2018-June 2021)
- Two factors chosen for analysis
  - Monthly guide usage over time
  - Individual resources clicked by users
- Top twenty most clicked individual resources from each guide
  - Individual resource data not available for McGill guide
- Open coding in Google Sheets by resource type

The guides used in this study were:
- Dalhousie University/Nova Scotia Health Authority, 2SLGBTQIA+ Health: https://dal.ca/libguides.com/2SLGBTQIAHealth
- Florida International University, Transgender Resources: https://libguides.medlib.fiu.edu/transinfo
- Kansas City University, LGBTQ Health Resources: https://kansascity.libguides.com/zb
- McGill University, LGBTQ Health: https://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/lgbt
- Stony Brook University, LGBTQ+ Health: https://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/lgbtqhealth

Results

1. What types of resources are most popular?

- Community, local, state, and provincial organizations: 64.11%
- Consumer health info (topic based): 26.06%
- Resource for providers of researchers: 16.71%
- General LGBTQ+ information: 15.71%
- National / International organizations: 28.53%

- Find a provider, service, or testing resource: 53.23%
- Guide clicks per resource (during 3 year period)
- 64.11% of total clicks (n = 1220)
- 35 clicks per resource

- Find a provider, health service, or testing resource: 53.23% of total clicks (n = 1013)
- 36 clicks per resource
- 1903 total clicks of most-used resources

2. How often are guides used?

- Increasing usage trend for Dalhousie/NSHA, Stony Brook, and Kansas City
- Decreasing usage trend for Florida International and McGill

- Guide clicks per month, July 2018-June 2021
- Use QR code for full data set and detailed graphs

Takeaways for librarians:
- Create a guide
- Focus on consumer health
- Keep it local!

Discussion and Conclusions

- Guide usage relatively low
  - Size of the LGBTQ+ community is relatively low compared to the general population (est. 4-5% of population in USA and Canada)
  - LGBTQ+ health is category of minority health
- We would argue that the importance of providing quality LGBTQ+ health information outweighs any concerns of large-scale usage
  - Providing such guides promotes health equity
  - Promoting guide can lead to greater awareness and usage

- People are looking at more local resources than national
- People want help getting connected with healthcare providers and services

- Future research directions
  - Deeper statistical analysis, including time series/seasonal analyses
  - Data from more guides to test reliability of findings
  - Measure impact of recommendations from this pilot on usage and guide uptake

References


Contact
gregg.stevens1@umassmed.edu
For data set and open coding, scan the QR code to the left, or go to https://bit.ly/3LzDARe

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