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

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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

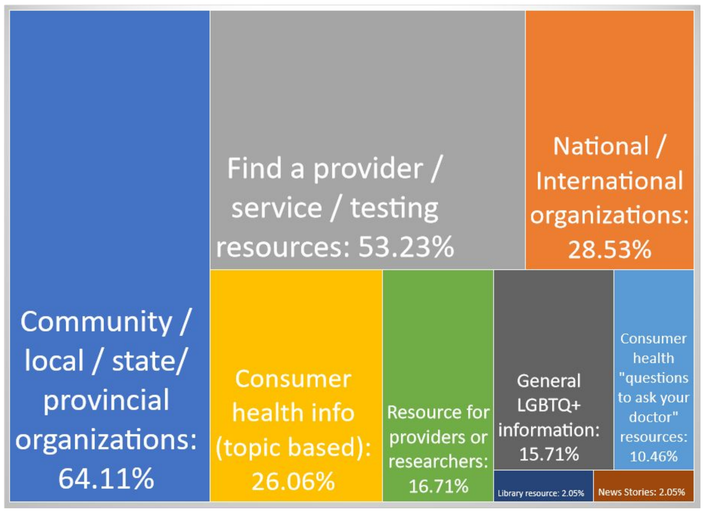
- Data for LGBTQ+ health research guides of five health sciences libraries were studied
- Usage data retrieved for a three year period (July 2018-June 2021)
- Two factors chosen for analysis
  - Monthly guide usage over time
    - Excel line graphs with trendlines
  - Individual resources clicked by users
    - Top twenty most clicked individual resources from each guide
      - Total of 80 links
        - 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/lgbt
- McGill University, *LGBTQ Health*: https://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/lgbtqhealth
- Stony Brook University, *LGBTQ+ Health*: https://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/lgbtqhealth

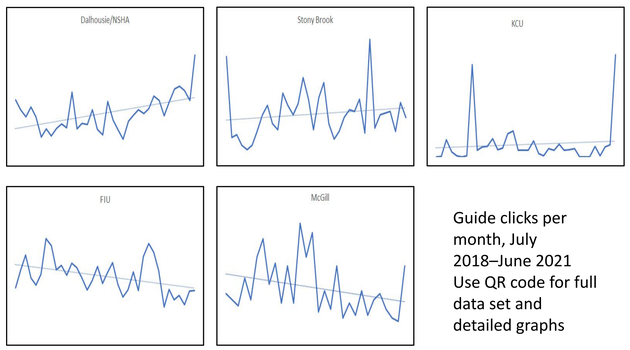
Results

1. What types of resources are most popular?



- **Community, local, state, and provincial organizations**
  - 64.11% of total clicks (n = 1220)
  - 35 clicks per resource (during 3 year period)
- **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?

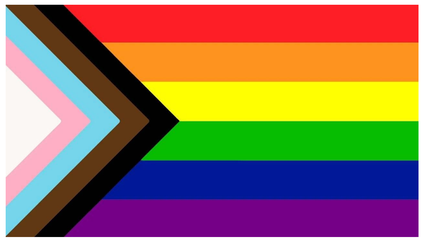


Guide clicks per month, July 2018–June 2021
Use QR code for full data set and detailed graphs

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

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

Hawkins, B. W., Morris, M., Nguyen, T., Siegel, J., & Vardell, E. (2017). Advancing the conversation: next steps for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) health sciences librarianship. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, *105*(4), 316–327. https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2017.206

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For data set and open coding, scan the QR code to the left, or go to https://bit.ly/3LzDARe