

ABSTRACT

ATTITUDES OF ILLINOIS PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TOWARD HOMOSEXUAL MEN

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The purpose of this study was to assess the levels of homophobia in physician assistants practicing in the state of Illinois toward homosexual men. A survey, which included the Attitudes toward Gays and Lesbians Scale and the Modern Homophobia Scale, was sent to a random selection of physician assistants from a list of licensed PAs obtained from the Illinois Division of Professional Regulation. A total of 450 surveys were mailed and 159 were returned within the allotted timeframe. Of the respondents 114 (72%) were female, 83 (53%) between the ages of 26 and 37 years old, and 136 (86%) were white American (non-Hispanic). Overall, scores indicated a low level of homophobia with women having significantly lower scores than men. Scores of respondents that had a friend or relative who identified as gay were significantly lower than those that did not indicating more positive attitudes toward homosexual men. No significant difference was found between age groups, level of education or PAs who reported caring for gay patients. There were differences in scores between religious groups with the least homophobic respondents being those that currently practice no religion. When scores were grouped according to specialty those that identified their area of practice to be Family Medicine had the highest levels of homophobia. Further educational opportunities and clinical exposure may help to lower homophobic attitudes even further, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in the health disparities of this population of patients.