



Statement on the Importance of Sexuality and Gender Research

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Statement on the Importance of Sexuality and Gender Research

We, the editors of leading sexual and gender-related science journals, are responding to the call for U.S. government researchers to withdraw all research manuscripts which are being considered for publication by external scientific journals which contain terms, such as gender, transgender, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and nonbinary so that they can be reviewed. This directive follows the removal of webpages and public health data from government websites, eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and the suspension of National Institutes of Health grant reviews and meetings. We believe that these efforts constitute clear examples of censorship of science and thus a political attempt to obstruct the discovery of knowledge.

Research into sexuality and gender is vital for identifying social, cultural, and medical needs of populations, and addressing inequalities across populations. Research on sexuality is not new but has a long tradition of enhancing our understanding of the human condition and addressing medical, social, and cultural harms.

Any limiting of research and forcing specific research agendas is an infringement on academic freedom and integrity. We believe that academic research must be free from political doctrines, and scientists must be able to freely investigate aspects of the human condition – including empirical phenomena which may be deemed “controversial” by some political leaders. Without research which challenges preconceived notions, we would not have fundamental knowledge of things like gravity or medicine. Without contesting unpopular opinions, we would still have racial segregation and criminalize homosexuality.

Removing certain terms from academic papers and limiting research into specific topics represents an attempt to ignore or erase these populations, and it may have disastrous consequences for health and wellbeing. We believe that these changes could lead to a regress in the significant milestones that have been achieved in recent years, such as the efforts toward the eradication of HIV, alongside key information needed to treat people in health settings.

While presumably intending to control research on sexuality and gender, the removal of these terms will impact all research. Many proposed keywords, such as gender, ethnicity, biases, and socioeconomic status are integral components in all types of research to understand the individual and social differences between groups of people. Removal of datasets and comprehensive information on specific populations will disproportionately negatively impact minoritized individuals, who already experience significantly worse physical and mental health.


As editors of these journals, we maintain our commitment to publish and promote research on these topics. Articles that have been accepted and are “in press” will be published

without author changes. Articles that have already been published in our journals will not be removed. Academic research will not be controlled, and we continue to encourage submissions on these topics aligned with our aims, values, and missions. We recognize that things are changing at a quick pace and as editors will continue to monitor and respond appropriately.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed here are those of the specific author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of Taylor & Francis, Informa, and/or the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality.

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