Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and other sexual orientations and gender identities) “face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights.”

A nationally representative survey of oral health consumers by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health® and NORC at the University of Chicago examined the experiences of individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ regarding their oral health, access to dental care, and experiences with discrimination.

A larger proportion of LGBTQ+ individuals reported experiencing discrimination during their lifetime based on their sexual orientation as well as other factors such as age, gender, and physical appearance compared to those not identifying as LGBTQ+.

LGBTQ+ individuals were 77% more likely to report experiencing discrimination on a weekly basis.

Individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ were 77% more likely to report they had visited an emergency department for dental care within the past year compared to individuals not identifying as LGBTQ+.

LGBTQ+ individuals were 31% more likely to say their most recent dental visit was two years ago or more.
Methodology:
The study was designed by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. Results were collected by NORC at the University of Chicago in January–February 2021 and January–February 2022 from adults 18 and older on the AmeriSpeak panel. AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the United States’ (US) household population. Randomly selected US households were sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from NORC National Sample Frame. Sampled households were contacted by US mail, telephone, and field interviewers. A sampling unit of 17,603 was used, with a final sample size of 5,682 and a final weighted cumulative response rate of 4.0%. All data presented account for appropriate sample weights. The margin of error for the survey is 1.75%.

Respondents to this 2022 round of the survey were identified as LGBTQ+, in part, if they answered the question “Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?” with “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” “something else,” or “I don’t know the answer.” Additionally, for the purposes of this survey, respondents were also identified as LGBTQ+ if they answered the question “How do you describe yourself?” with transgender or [I] do not identify as male, female or transgender. Logistic regression models were used to estimate odds ratios and were adjusted for race/ethnicity, gender, age, education, income, living in an urban vs. rural area, and reporting regularly brushing twice a day. While the cross-sectional nature of these data does not allow for causal conclusions to be drawn, future research should focus on examining underlying factors (e.g., stigma, discrimination, other socioeconomic factors) that may help further explain these findings.

Suggested Citation:
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