

**CRITICAL REVIEW: CHIVA CONFERENCE May 12<sup>th</sup> 2017**  
**Supporting LGBT + young people in healthcare**  
**Dr. Thom O'Neill**

Dr. O'Neill presented findings from his work on healthcare inequalities faced by young people of sexual and gender minorities. Young LGBT people face issues with access to healthcare. There are other nuances beyond mental health that impact how young people present to and experience healthcare.

He used to example that teenage lesbians and bisexual girls have higher rates of pregnancy than heterosexual girls to demonstrate that it is not helpful for healthcare services and approaches to be designed in a heteronormative way. Behaviour and identity are distinct and this must be considered to ensure prevention efforts are relevant to people with a range of feelings and experiences.

Despite the necessity for greater representation of LGBT needs and experiences in social interventions and healthcare settings, societal attitudes are shifting, evidenced by the increased visibility of LGBT characters on TV and online streaming services.

To better understand health inequalities and how young LGBT people are presenting in healthcare, we need to know where they are coming from in their lives. He presented statistics showing the disproportionately higher burden of stigma, bullying and discrimination, negative feelings and mental health issues, violence, experiencing of being forced to leave home, risk taking behavior, inadequate sexual and relationship education, minority stress, access and underrepresentation in research.

He stressed the importance of inclusive and considerate language and visible messaging in clinics. The way people speak makes a massive difference in how young LGBT people perceive the environment that they're in as well as available services and support.

**Irina Lut**