

## **Abstract**

**DISSERTATION:** A Meta-Analysis of Sexual Orientation and Clinical Decision Making

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The impact of client variables on clinical decisions has long been part of the broader clinical judgment literature. Contrary to the empirical evidence supporting the existence of biased attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals, there is minimal empirical support displaying biased judgments. In this meta-analysis, 39 clinical judgment studies were analyzed regarding the extent to which client sexual orientation impacted judgment accuracy and judgment bias. This analysis marks the first attempt to include a more expansive set of clinical decisions, as evidenced by the inclusion of judgment bias. Incongruent with the substantial body of literature suggesting a potential for LGB biases to impact clinical decisions, the present study observed no significant differences between judgments with LGB and heterosexual patients. These findings drastically deviate from empirical theories and literature, and thus should be considered in light of notable limitations within the included articles. Results are discussed regarding the importance of methodological innovation, and counseling psychology practice and training.

*Keywords:* meta-analysis, clinical judgment, sexual orientation, client variable bias