

# Homosexuality: A Mental Problem That Shouldn't Be Called Sexual Deviance

Abdulaziz Daftari<sup>1</sup>, Ali Khaleghi<sup>2\*</sup>

1. University of Osole Din, Qom, Iran.

2. Psychiatry and Psychology Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

**\*Corresponding Author:**

Address: Roozbeh Hospital, Tehran, Iran, Postal Code: 1333715914.

Tel: 98-21 5522004, Fax: 98-21 55421959, Email: [alikhaleghi\\_bme84@yahoo.com](mailto:alikhaleghi_bme84@yahoo.com)

**Article Information:**

Received Date: 2025/05/27, Revised Date: 2025/06/05, Accepted Date: 2025/06/08

**H**omosexuality is a sexual orientation that is the subject of much debate and has various supporters and opponents, and for this reason, there are different approaches to it. Some view homosexuality from a moral perspective, while others view it from the perspective of individual freedom and choice. Some governments fully support it and have implemented strong protective laws for homosexuality, while some countries are completely against it. In addition, there is also a variety of scientific evidence surrounding homosexuality: from evidence suggesting different biological traits in homosexuals (1) to evidence that refutes the biological and neurological correlates of homosexuality (2). Experts in the fields of humanities such as philosophy and religious sciences have also raised different debates in this regard. Therefore, in this editorial, our goal was to provide a brief description of homosexuality from the perspectives of biology and neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry, philosophy, and various religions.

From a biological and neuroscientific standpoint, some arguments against homosexuality revolve around the concept of reproductive fitness and evolutionary adaptation. Critics may assert that natural selection favors reproductive behaviors that enhance the survival of the species, positing that heterosexual relationships are fundamental for procreation (3). Furthermore, research in neuroscience suggests that certain brain structures and functions are associated with heterosexual behavior; advocates argue that deviations from the norm

may signify underlying neurological anomalies rather than a valid orientation (4). This perspective raises questions about the biological basis for homosexuality, positing that behaviors not aligned with reproduction could be viewed as evolutionary maladaptations. Consequently, proponents may argue that societies should prioritize configurations that promote reproductive success and continuity over those that deviate from traditional reproductive norms. Additionally, there is another view that suggests that all brain changes in homosexuals occur in adulthood and, in fact, no one is born homosexual (5). That is, there is insufficient substantial evidence supporting distinct differences in brain structure or function between homosexual and heterosexual adolescents. During childhood and adolescence, individuals often lack a fully formed sense of self and understanding of sexual matters, as the relevant cultural contexts are still emerging and evolving. As a result, significant behavioral changes at the social level may not yet be present, and the brain is unlikely to have undergone major changes. Over time, as individuals mature, they become more acquainted with gender and sexual concepts. Factors such as inadequate self-awareness, parenting challenges, or childhood experiences can lead them to explore themes of homosexuality. This exploration may result in the formation of new beliefs and cultural contexts that do not align with their biological sex. Consequently, homosexuals may envision themselves in their preferred gender identity, seeking to align their behaviors, values, and lifestyle



with this identity rather than their biological sex (2). Depending on the extent of their engagement with this identity—whether positively, neutrally, or negatively—they may experience corresponding changes in brain function and culturally influenced behaviors.

Once a specific area of the brain adapts to align with a person's gender identity, homosexuals may still retain some culturally influenced behaviors shaped by their upbringing, familial habits, and community. As a result, they often face significant contradictions and conflicts in their personal and social lives, which can lead to various psychological and psychiatric issues. Indeed, from a psychological and psychiatric perspective, some critics of homosexuality argue that same-sex attraction and behaviors can be linked to developmental issues or psychological disorders (6, 7). Historically, various psychological frameworks viewed homosexuality as a deviation from normative sexual development, associating it with unresolved emotional conflicts or maladaptive behaviors. Numerous studies have shown that the prevalence of suicide attempts, depressive and anxiety disorders, and alcohol and other substance use disorders is significantly higher in homosexuals compared to heterosexuals (8, 9). Although the prevailing perspective in contemporary psychology embraces acceptance, dissenting voices highlight the potential for therapeutic interventions aimed at addressing what are viewed as dysregulated sexual orientations. They argue that some individuals experience distress about their same-sex attractions, indicating that these feelings may not be inherently positive or healthy (10, 11). From this viewpoint, professional efforts to explore and, in some cases, redirect such inclinations could be framed as valid interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being and emotional stability, reflecting a belief in the possibility of change and adherence to heteronormative standards.

Homosexuality, as a philosophical subject, has been discussed and examined since ancient times. In philosophy, it has been analyzed from various perspectives such as ethics, metaphysics, human rights, and political philosophy. While contemporary philosophical discourse often leans toward the acceptance of homosexuality, a counter-argument exists rooted in traditional ethical frameworks. Some philosophers uphold Moral Naturalism, arguing that sexual behaviors should align with what is considered "natural" and that homosexual acts deviate from established norms of procreation and sexual complementarity. Critics argue that Utilitarianism fails to fully account for the potential societal harm stemming from normalizing same-sex relationships, suggesting that this could undermine traditional family structures and the stability of communities. Furthermore, conservative critiques posit that existentialist views on individual identity overlook the social responsibilities tied to sexual behavior. Thus, these critiques advocate a moral

understanding of sexuality that prioritizes a collective well-being over individual freedom. These perspectives challenge the narrative of broad acceptance and raise concerns about the implications of redefining sexual identity according to contemporary norms (12).

Religious frameworks, particularly within the Abrahamic faiths, strongly oppose homosexuality based on doctrinal teachings. In Judaism, the Talmudic interpretations of sacred texts reinforce prohibitions against homosexual acts, which are seen as violations of divine law and threats to the sanctity of family and procreation. Christianity maintains a similar stance, with the Catholic Church categorizing homosexual inclinations as "intrinsically disordered" and viewing same-sex acts as sinful. Protestant denominations that adhere to traditional beliefs often express concern that acceptance of homosexuality contradicts biblical teachings and undermines moral authority. In Islam, homosexuality is unequivocally condemned; the Quran highlights severe consequences for such behavior. Major Islamic schools of thought remain united in this prohibition, viewing heterosexual marriage as essential for social cohesion and human flourishing. The rejection of homosexuality across these religious traditions emphasizes adherence to sacred texts and the belief that natural law dictates the proper order of human relationships (13, 14).

Considering what has been said so far, what is certain is that there is strong scientific evidence and philosophical and theological reasons to reject homosexuality as a normal sexual act. So in such circumstances, is it correct to unquestioningly support homosexuality? Is it correct to consider only one value of freedom and human rights to normalize homosexuality and sacrifice other values such as the family pillar, individual and social well-being, and healthy social relationships? Is the American Psychological Association's (APA) 1973 decision to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders, which was later extended to other sexual deviations such as transgenderism, correct without sufficient scientific evidence? The answer to all of these questions seems to be no, because even in countries with strong laws supporting homosexuality and even transgenderism, we still see a much higher prevalence and incidence of major mental health problems and domestic violence among homosexuals than among heterosexuals. Therefore, what subconsciously comes to the minds of the authors is whether the widespread popularity and publicity of this issue around the world is in line with population reduction policies to slow down the process of global warming? Or is this one of the strategies adopted by those in power to involve young people in sexual deviance in order to destroy their thinking power?

### **Conflict of Interest**

None.

## References

1. Votinov M, Goerlich KS, Puiu AA, Smith E, Nickl-Jockschat T, Derntl B, et al. Brain structure changes associated with sexual orientation. *Sci Rep*. 2021;11(1):5078.
2. Frigerio A, Ballerini L, Valdés Hernández M. Structural, Functional, and Metabolic Brain Differences as a Function of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation: A Systematic Review of the Human Neuroimaging Literature. *Arch Sex Behav*. 2021;50(8):3329-52.
3. Davis AC, Arnocky S. An Evolutionary Perspective on Appearance Enhancement Behavior. *Arch Sex Behav*. 2022;51(1):3-37.
4. Quintana GR, Pfaus JG. Do Sex and Gender Have Separate Identities? *Arch Sex Behav*. 2024;53(8):2957-75.
5. Mohammadi MR, Khaleghi A. Transsexualism: A Different Viewpoint to Brain Changes. *Clin Psychopharmacol Neurosci*. 2018;16(2):136-43.
6. Kidd G, Marston L, Nazareth I, Osborn D, Pitman A. Suicidal thoughts, suicide attempt and non-suicidal self-harm amongst lesbian, gay and bisexual adults compared with heterosexual adults: analysis of data from two nationally representative English household surveys. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*. 2024;59(2):273-83.
7. Wittgens C, Fischer MM, Buspavanich P, Theobald S, Schweizer K, Trautmann S. Mental health in people with minority sexual orientations: A meta-analysis of population-based studies. *Acta Psychiatr Scand*. 2022;145(4):357-72.
8. Malik MH, Iqbal S, Noman M, Sarfraz Z, Sarfraz A, Mustafa S. Mental Health Disparities Among Homosexual Men and Minorities: A Systematic Review. *Am J Mens Health*. 2023;17(3):15579883231176646.
9. Alibudbud RC. "Does Sexual Orientation Matter?": A Comparative Analysis of the Prevalence and Determinants of Depression and Anxiety Among Heterosexual and Non-Heterosexual College Students in a University in Metro Manila. *J Homosex*. 2023;70(6):1119-37.
10. Tetkovic I, Parsons S, White SR, Bowes L. Same sex-attraction as a predictor of suicide and self-harm behaviours: The role of bullying and social support. *J Affect Disord*. 2024;350:396-402.
11. Oginni OA, Lim KX, Purves KL, Lu Y, Johansson A, Jern P, et al. Causal Influences of Same-Sex Attraction on Psychological Distress and Risky Sexual Behaviors: Evidence for Bidirectional Effects. *Arch Sex Behav*. 2023;52(3):1213-28.
12. Big-Alabo S, Opuowei JP, Umezurike JE. An Ethico-Philosophical Diquisition of Homosexuality. *Asian Journal of Philosophy and Religion (AJPR)*. 2023;2(1):137-46.
13. Westwood S. Religious-based negative attitudes towards LGBTQ people among healthcare, social care and social work students and professionals: A review of the international literature. *Health Soc Care Community*. 2022;30(5):e1449-e70.
14. Glas S, Spierings N. Rejecting homosexuality but tolerating homosexuals: The complex relations between religiosity and opposition to homosexuality in 9 Arab countries. *Soc Sci Res*. 2021;95:102533.