



## Summary for Canada on Homophobia in Sports

*Under Embargo until 9 May 9:00 am EDT (New York)/11:00 pm AEST (Sydney)*

*Out on the Fields is the first international study and largest conducted on homophobia in sports. Nearly 9500 people took part including **1123** lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight **Canadians**. The study focused on issues of sexuality in team sports and the English speaking countries. Repucom conducted the research with the study being initiated by Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 and supported by a coalition of sports organisations. **The study methodology and results were reviewed by a panel of seven academics from six universities including Victoria University (Australia), Penn State University, University of Massachusetts (USA); Brunel University (UK); University of Winnipeg and Lavel University (Canada).***

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Sport Participation

- The majority of lesbian, gay and bisexual people said they played a wide variety of Canadian sports, particularly in their youth (under 22)
- 1 in 4 (25%) gay men did not play youth team sports with many of these men saying negative experiences in school PE class (45%) turned them off team sport or they feared they would be rejected because of their sexuality (34%)

#### Sporting Culture

- **29% of all participants and 36% of gay men believe LGB people are 'not accepted at all' or only 'accepted a little' in sports culture**
- 65% of all participants and 75% of gay men believe homophobia is more common in Canadian sports than the rest of society

#### Homophobia and Discrimination

- **81% of participants witnessed or experienced homophobia in sports (both straight and LGB people)**
- Participants were more likely to have witnessed homophobia than experienced it personally. More than half (57%) of gay men, nearly half (45%) of lesbians and 41% of straight men said they had personally experienced homophobia

#### Of those who have been personally targeted:

- **26% of gay men and 13% of lesbians said they have received verbal threats of harm**
- 41% of gay men and 16% of lesbians have been bullied
- 23% of gay men and 13% of lesbians have been physically assaulted
- 84% of gay men 88% of lesbians have received verbal slurs such as "faggot" or "dyke"

Research Conducted by

Study Initiated and Managed by

REPUcom



Full report at [www.outonthefields.com](http://www.outonthefields.com)



## Youth Sports (under 22)

- **70% believe youth team sports are not welcoming or safe for LGB people**
- 86% of gay youth and 89% of lesbian Canadian youth said they were at least partially in the closet, keeping their sexuality secret from all or some of their teammates
- These youth said they stayed in the closet because they feared multiple forms of discrimination, for example 42% of gay youth and 16% of lesbians feared they would be bullied and 30% of gay youth and 20% of lesbians were worried about discrimination from coaches and officials. Meanwhile, 44% of gay youth and 48% were worried about being rejected by teammates

## Spectator Stands

- **66% of Canadian participants believe an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person would not be very safe as a spectator at a sporting event**
- Spectator stands (28%) followed by school PE class (28%) were chosen as the most likely locations for homophobia to occur

## How Canada Compares to other English speaking countries

- Canadians were more positive about sports culture than any other country, with the lowest number believing LGB people are not accepted in sport
- Although they have a positive perception of sports culture, Canadians were the second most likely (after the USA) to report witnessing or experiencing homophobia in sports. In fact Canadian straight men were the most likely to say they had been personally experienced homophobia
- Canadian gay men also reported the highest rates of physical assaults and bullying (bullying was tied with the UK) and the highest number of straight men who said they received homophobic slurs
- Lesbian youth were also more likely to be in the closet than in any other country and were the second most likely to report physical assaults

- School PE class also stood out in Canada as a unique area of concern. Participants in most countries said homophobia is most likely to occur in spectator stands, however, Canadians ranked PE class and spectator stands as equally homophobic. Canadians were more likely to pick PE class than those in any other country, more than double the number in Australia (28% vs. 13%).

## SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were asked to select a range of possible solutions or could submit their own. The top three solutions selected were:

1. Start early with schools, coaches and parents taking homophobia and bullying seriously in sporting environments
2. National sporting organisations need to adopt and promote clear anti-homophobia and LGB inclusion policies for professional and amateur players
3. More LGB professional sporting stars need to come out of the closet to set an example

## Recommendations from Researchers

- In many parts of the world PE teachers receive no training about homophobia or supporting LGB athletes. Coaches, physical education teachers and sport officials need mandatory training on how best to support LGB athletes
- Sporting organisations, schools and teams need to adopt a zero tolerance for players and fans who engage in homophobic behaviour

## About the study

The data for Out on the Fields was collected through a 10-15 minute online survey with recruitment focused primarily on the UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ireland. The study focuses on issues of sexuality, not gender, which is why LGB is used rather than the now standard LGBTI. People from all sexualities took part, including nearly 25% heterosexual.