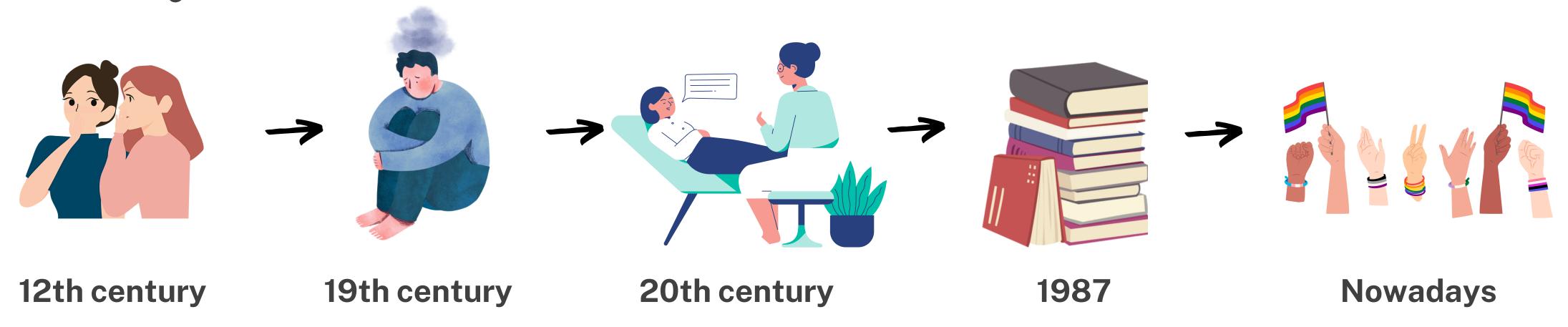
# Underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ in mental health research

Tom Kroon, Yannick Bosboom, Romy Schornagel and Eline Kouwenhoven

The LGBTQ+ community faces higher risks and percentages of mental health issues due to discrimination and social pressure.<sup>1,2</sup> The diversity of this community remains underrepresented in mental health studies due to the fact that research has primarily focused on young, white gay people and the Global North.<sup>3,4</sup> Therefore, this needs to change!

# History in the Global North<sup>5</sup>



LGBTQ+ people are seen as unnatural and sinful

**Global differences** 

Start of studying homosexuality, it is seen as **a mental disease**  It is believed homosexuality can be **treated with therapy**  Homosexuality is removed from DSM

(Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) More acceptance towards LGBTQ+, but this still varies across cultures

Both the history and current situation vary among different cultures.

- Western Countries: Improving acceptance and representation of LGBTQ+ people<sup>5</sup>
- Africa and Northern Asia: Low acceptance, influenced by economy and religion<sup>6</sup>
- **Colonial-Era Laws**: Public health discourse dominates, supported by laws against same-sex sexuality<sup>7</sup>
- Islamic Cultures: Stigmatisation of queer identities and behaviours among Muslims<sup>8</sup>

## Consequences

This situation has impact on both mental health research and society.

- Gap in knowledge regarding the breadth and diversity of experiences within LGBTQ+ communities<sup>3</sup>
- **Barrier** for seeking mental health support: fear of misunderstanding and -treating<sup>9</sup>
- Misdiagnosis & unequal treatment in mental health care<sup>10</sup>
- Gap in training, knowledge and understanding of healthcare providers<sup>10</sup>

### Solutions

Creating awareness of the underrepresentation of the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community

Encouraging more acceptance and more research within less supporting cultures

Removing the barrier for seeking mental health support

Education and training for healthcare providers and society

#### References



