



IDEA: Let's design, conduct, and report research with diversity and inclusion in mind

To the Editor:

We are writing to express our disappointment with the design and reporting of research recently published in the *Journal*.¹ "What do mom and dad think?" is a title that is inherently biased and manifests anti-Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, Intersex + (LGBTQAI+) sentiment. We are particularly troubled with the title of this manuscript in light of the Academy's recent re-commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA).² To explicitly reify a gender binary and privilege heterosexuality marginalizes and erases individuals who identify as gender non-binary and/or homosexual. In fact, individuals of all genders and sexualities can identify as parents, rendering the title incorrect as well as offensive.

We commend the authors for referencing "parents" in the body of their manuscript as this inclusive term supports the aim of their study and describes their participants in a way that is not oppressive or dismissive. Unfortunately, in the demographic characteristics listed

in Table 1 of the manuscript, we again see the biased terms "mother" and "father" used to describe study participants. When viewing the title and participant demographics table, the reader is left to infer that only cis-gender, heterosexual identifying individuals took part in the study. It may be that the authors purposely included only gender binary, heterosexual parent participants. If this is the case, the reader is given no rationale within the manuscript as to why this research strategy was undertaken. Another possibility is that the authors did not consider that transgender/gender non-binary and/or homosexual individuals can be parents. According to the Williams' Institute, UCLA, 170,000 children in the US are being raised by same-sex couples, and 37% of LGBT adults have had a child at some time in their lives.³ Unfortunately, the decision to omit LGBTQAI+ parents or to not include them explicitly in the demographic data are limitations to the study that were not, and we believe should be, mentioned in the manuscript. We feel it would be of interest not only to the scientific community, but to the profession as a whole to have included those data given professional dietitians frequently interface with patients/clients and parents who identify as LGBTQAI+.

We hope that the authors will consider removing the first sentence of the title of their manuscript, and revise their Table 1 as appropriate to ensure that their manuscript does no further harm to JAND's LGBTQAI+ readership. Since editing language is not enough to address the underlying methodologic concerns, we also encourage a revision of the methods and limitations sections of the paper. As researchers, scholars, and practitioners of dietetics, engaged in work to improve inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in the profession, we

hope that not only the authors, but the readership of JAND will use this opportunity to carefully consider a gender inclusive, anti-bias approach to study design and data analysis, the use of gender inclusive language within manuscripts, and engagement with diverse individuals in the research process.

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