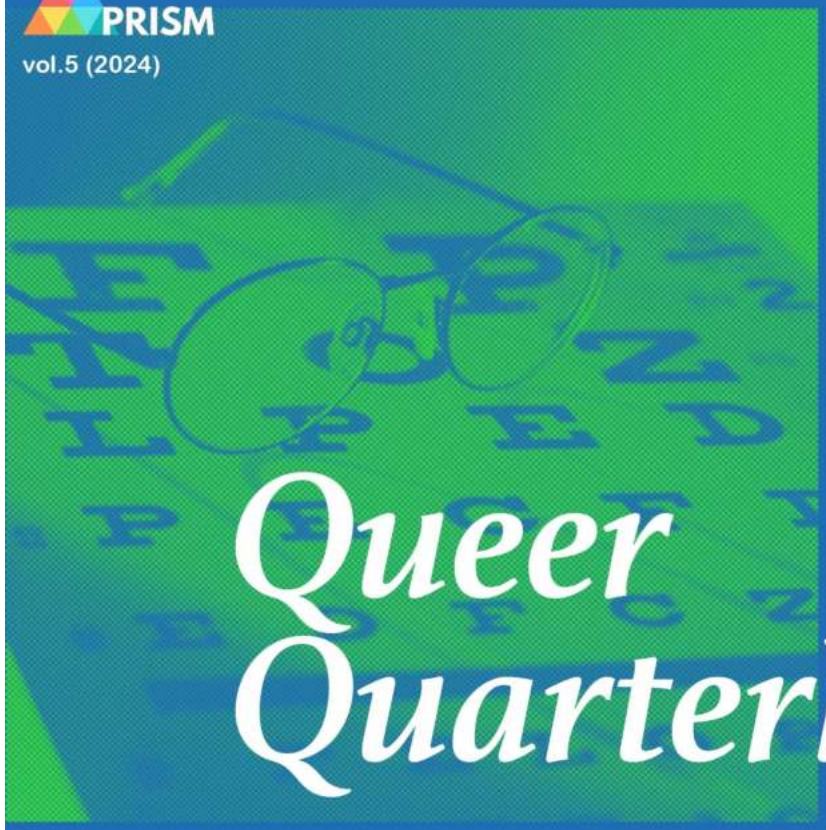
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Queer Quarterly

We know that there is more to being a doctor than just studying the books and reciting information taught to you. The relationship between a doctor and patient should be built through a welcoming environment, where there is mutual trust and respect. Part of this respect can be established by making a commitment to being more open minded and culturally aware. Not only that, but it has been well documented that LGBTQ+ individuals have large health disparities compared to the general population.[2] In order to address disparities and create a more inclusive environment within Optometry, we distribute the Queer Quarterly with the intention of improving the health of our LGBTQ+ patients.

1. AMA J Ethics. 2020;22(3):E255-259. doi: 10.1001/amajethics.2020.255.
2. Carl G. StreedJr., Ellen P. McCarthy, and Jennifer S. Haas. Self-Reported Physical and Mental Health of Gender Nonconforming Transgender Adults in the United States. LGBT Health.Oct 2018.443-448.http://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2017.0275

Everyone has Pronouns

By: Francesca Mancini

A good place to start is with pronouns! Pronouns are an important part of creating a space that feels welcoming and safe, whether you are a patient, provider, or a student intern joining a new team. Similar to how it is respectful to use someone's name, using someone's pronouns is a simple way to show that you respect them. Keep in mind that pronouns are not "preferred;" in fact, stating that they are preferred may infer that using pronouns other than ones specified is acceptable, or that pronouns are simply a matter of choice.

Pronouns are a way for people to affirm their identity and express their gender - while we may think that our pronouns can be easily assumed and there is no need to specify, being more intentional in stating our pronouns can help open up a space to share and avoid misgendering our colleagues and patients. Simply introducing yourself with pronouns to a patient can be a good way to allow room for them to express their own. Using correct pronouns and making a note of them in your chart is a basic piece of demographic data that can and should be included alongside an address or phone number.





We Need Queer Care

By: Jessica Spina

In "How to Offer Inclusive Care for LGBTQ+ Patients," doctors Matthew J. Roberts, and Paula McDowell describe the importance of diversity and inclusion within the optometric community. They explain how to use appropriate terminology when speaking to patients in clinic, barriers to care within the LGBTQ+ population, and how to create an inclusive optometric practice. One piece of information from the article that I found particularly important was that the LGBTQ+ population has the highest rate of "tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use." As future optometrists, we understand the significance of smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug use on ocular structures. For example, cigarette use has been proven to lead to higher rates of macular degeneration[1], and excessive alcohol use may lead to optic neuropathy[2] This article also addresses how gay men and transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV, which often manifests in the eye in the form of cotton wool spots or microaneurysms. It is necessary to understand these signs, but it's perhaps even more important to understand that members of the LGBTQ+ community have a higher risk for some ocular and systemic diseases. Education in medical professions can help ensure that members of the LGBTQ+ community receive the primary care they deserve.

1. Khan JC, Thurlby DA, Shahid H, Clayton DG, Yates JR, Bradley M, Moore AT, Bird AC; Genetic Factors in AMD Study. Smoking and age related macular degeneration: the number of pack years of cigarette smoking is a major determinant of risk for both geographic atrophy and choroidal neovascularisation. Br J Ophthalmol. 2006 Jan;90(1):75-80. doi: 10.1136/bjo.2005.073643. PMID: 16361672; PMCID: PMC1856879.
2. Karimi S, Arabi A, Shahraki T. Alcohol and the Eye. J Ophthalmic Vis Res. 2021 Apr 29;16(2):260-270. doi: 10.18502/jovr.v16i2.9089. PMID: 34055263; PMCID: PMC8126742.
3. "How to Offer Inclusive Care for LGBTQ+ Patients." Matthew J. Roberts, Paula McDowell. Review of Optometry, January 2022./

Eye Feel the Rush!

By: David Martin

Amyl nitrite is a vasodilating medication prescribed to treat chest pain by increasing blood flow to the heart, but did you know a closely related chemical, alkyl nitrite, is a recreational drug called 'poppers'? Poppers were first used by gay men in the 1960s for the purpose of enhancing sexual experience[1]. Today they are regarded as a prominent feature of the queer community, even in pop culture. Maybe you've heard queer artist Troye Sivan's 2023 song 'Rush' which makes blatant reference to a specific brand of poppers bearing the same name.

As a healthcare provider, it's important to be aware of the dangers associated with recreational use of amyl nitrite. The FDA warns that inhaling poppers can cause serious system wide health issues due to the caustic nature of the chemicals. One of these health concerns is Poppers Maculopathy (PMP), an ocular disease process associated with long-term frequent use of the drug[3]. Patients with PMP can experience transient or even permanent loss of central vision[3]. The pathophysiology of PMP is not fully understood yet because it was only initially documented 20 years ago. One school of thought is that poppers contribute to overproduction of reaction oxygen species which damage macular photoreceptors[3].



In order to save more eyes from the dangers of poppers, it's important to increase awareness for both patients and doctors. Furthermore, if doctors put in the effort to make their exam room a safe space for queer people, patients will be more transparent and receive better care as a result.

1. Kelleher, P. (2021, October 8). The extraordinary story of how poppers became a cornerstone of gay culture. PinkNews. https://www.thepinknews.com/2021/10/08/poppers-history-adam-zmith-deep-sniff/
2. FDA. (2021, July 15). Ingesting, inhaling nitrite "poppers" can cause severe injury or death. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/ingesting-or-inhaling-nitrite-poppers-can-cause-severe-injury-or-death
3. Mechanism of action still unknown in poppers maculopathy. Review of Optometry. (2021, December 7). https://www.reviewofoptometry.com/article/mechanism-of-action-still-unknown-in-poppers-maculopathy

2023-2024

Meet the Prism E-board!

President



Francesca Mancini, OD2

I'm Frankie! I use she/her pronouns and I am a lesbian. I also identify as a capricorn and Swiftie. I love to craft and make jewelry, as well as collect little knick-knacks. My favorite thing to do is go to concerts - I recently saw Boygenius and Beyonce. Feel free to reach out or say hi on campus!

Vice-President



David Martin, OD2

Hi everyone! I am a cis gay man and my pronouns are he/him. Outside of school I love listening to pop music (Rina Sawayama, Léon) and rotting away in bed. I'm excited to help foster a queer community at NECO and create a safe space to be authentic. :)

Treasurer



Jessica Spina, OD2

Hi I am Jessica! I am a second year NECO student and I am currently the treasurer of PRISM. I am a cis, pansexual female who is obsessed with her cat (and also Tate Mcrae). I am so lucky to be a part of such a great club!

Secretary



Courtney Polcyn, OD1

Hey I'm Courtney (she/her)! Outside of school, I love playing board games and video games, reading, and learning to crochet. My favorite artists are Hozier and Mitski. As a bi person, I'm so excited to be part of a group that celebrates and creates a safe place for queer people!

Qs? email us at prism@neco.edu