



Autism Intervention Research
Network on Physical Health

AIR-P LEND Seminar Series

Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health



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Learning Objectives

- Sexuality and gender in autism – different expressions of sexuality, including asexuality, romance, gender identity/expression
- Autonomy and agency in sexuality and gender identity among autistic people across the lifespan
- Issues of consent and sexual abuse/assault prevention in the context of exploring intimacy





Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health: **General Overview**

**National
Coordinating Center
(NCC):
UCLA PI/PD: Kuo**

**Data Repository
& Network
Management**

**Autistic
Researcher
Review Board
(ARRB)**

**Research Nodes
(Steering
Committee)**

**Collaborating
Research
Entities (CREs)**

- **AIR-P Scholars and Pilot and Feasibility Funding programs**
- **Autism and Physical Health research days at AUCD and CARES conferences**
- **Annual supplement in *Pediatrics***

Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health Node

**Node leaders: Lisa Croen, PhD;
Maria Massolo, PhD**

Division of Research,
Kaiser Permanente
Northern California



Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health Node

Guiding principle: Sexuality and relationships contribute to life satisfaction, health, and well-being for all individuals

Goal: To improve sexual and reproductive healthcare and outcomes for autistic people across the lifespan, with a focus on autistic women and LGBTQIA+ people



Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health Node

Node Priorities

- Sexuality Education
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Services
- Sexual Victimization and Abuse
- LGBTQIA+ Health



Work guided by

- Participatory approach
- Collaborations
- Workforce development
- Identification of knowledge gaps





Participatory approach

- ❖ Stakeholder advisory group



Collaborations

- ❖ INSAR Policy Brief: “Promoting Wellbeing in Autistic Youth and Adults: A Positive Focus on Sexuality and Gender Diversity”

Workforce development



❖ Mentoring early career investigators

Jennifer Ames, PhD.

Addressing reproductive health and obstetrics/gynecology health care in autistic adults

Laura Graham Holmes, PhD.

Health equity promotion for sexual and gender minorities on the autism spectrum

Lauren Baczewski, Doctoral candidate.

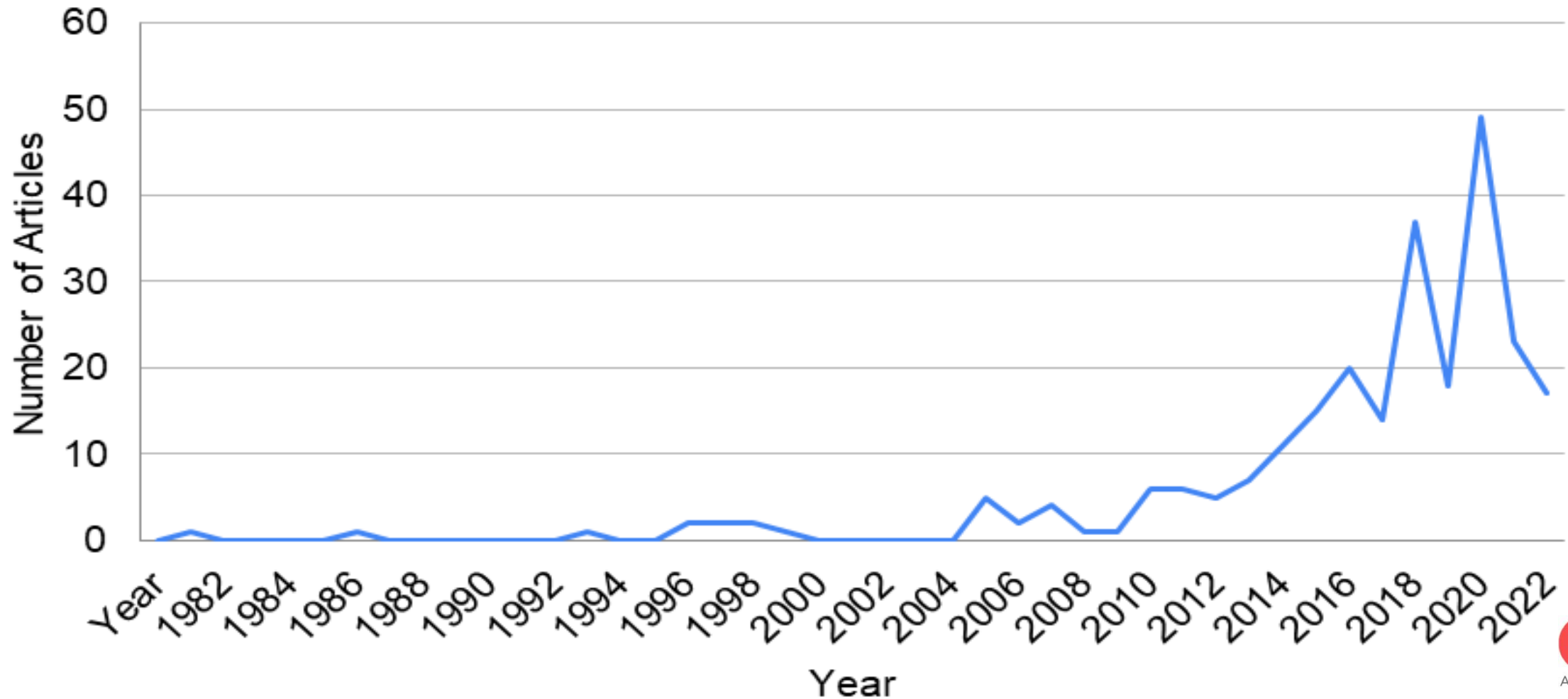
Exploring the Mental Health Care Experiences of Autistic LGBTQ+ Youth: A Community-participatory Study



Identification of knowledge gaps

- ❖ Comprehensive Literature review

Number of Articles Published on Autism and Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health per Year



Number of Articles Published on Autism and Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health per Year

From 1982-2014 only about 10 articles were published about autism and gender, sexuality, and reproductive health. From 2016-2018, this number jumped to about 20 articles per year. From 2018-2022 the number of articles published would rise to 40 articles in 2018 and 50 articles in 2022. This field has started generating more research and evidence in the past 4 years.



Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health: **Panel Discussion**

Sexuality education is mandatory in most states in this country, and yet we have evidence that autistic youth are not receiving adequate sexuality education.

In your view, who should be involved in teaching autistic youth about gender and sexuality?

Related to this is the issues of consent, abuse/assault in the context of exploring intimacy.

- What's the best way to bring this up with autistic adolescents and adults?
 - Are there resources available that address these topics?
 - For parents/autistic individuals, including those with ID/for clinicians?
-

For many parents, their child's growing awareness of their own gender and sexuality can be challenging. This may be particularly true for parents of autistic youth.

What should be the role of parents in their child's decision making about their sexuality and gender?

Connect with folks from this seminar!

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Website

airpnetwork.ucla.edu



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The structure, instructions, and accessibility guidelines of this AIR-P LEND Seminar Series were developed in part based on existing processes and content used to develop the PacWest ITAC LEND Learning Modules.