

# Gay men vent aggression through verbals, not violence – new study

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Young men can be aggressive - even during the season of goodwill. Now, a new study by University of East London (UEL) psychologist Tom Dickins shows how patterns of male aggression vary with sexual orientation.

According to the findings of the study, forthcoming in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, homosexual men score higher for empathy and show significantly lower levels of physical aggression than heterosexual men.

However they do show similar levels of non-physical and indirect aggression, that is the ability to inflict pain while avoiding identification and counter-aggression, for example by spreading malicious gossip.

Dr Dickins' findings are based on data collected from an internet sample of two groups of 91 homosexual and 91 heterosexual males he surveyed using self-report psychometric questionnaires. The participants were recruited and interviewed online to ensure privacy.

Dr Dickins, who has published extensively on evolutionary psychology, said: "Homosexual males are often reported to be less physically aggressive than heterosexual males. Previous aggression studies have not, however, compared all forms of direct aggression, indirect aggression, and empathy among these populations.

"These results suggest that homosexual men are not less aggressive than

heterosexuals per se, they simply express their aggression in different ways."

Aggression, empathy and sexual orientation in males by Sergeant, Dickins, Davies, Griffiths, will be published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences* early in the New Year.

Source: University of East London

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