

Study finds 50 percent same-sex attracted women are with children and most want marriage

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(PhysOrg.com) -- University of Queensland research has shown almost 50 percent of same-sex attracted women over the age of 34 have children in their lives and most want to marry.

The final report from the Not So Private Lives national survey also found the issue relating to [children](#) was not restricted to people of an older age, as almost a third of both same-sex attracted females and males under the age of 25 said they planned to have children.

Researcher Sharon Dane, from UQ's School of Psychology, said research relating to same-sex parenting had generally provided overall figures when it came to the numbers who report having children.

“Results based on different [age groups](#), however, are likely to offer a more meaningful interpretation of these findings given that people in general are having children in later years,” she said.

“For example, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the peak child bearing age for women is between the years 30 and 34.”

She said when focusing on the results for the cohort over 34 years of age, 47.1 percent of same-sex attracted women reported having children in their lives, whether their own or the result of a current or past relationship. For same-sex attracted men in this age cohort, the figure

was 17.6 percent. The large majority of these individuals were in a same-sex relationship.

Among participants who reported having at least one child under the age of 20 in their lives, 64.7 percent of same-sex attracted [women](#) and 24.1 percent of same-sex attracted men reported living with these children full-time.

Ms Dane said although the findings from the survey revealed the majority of same-sex attracted participants selected “marriage” as their personal choice for relationship recognition, results indicated this was even more likely to be the case among those with a same-sex partner and living full-time with young children.

“For example, among those living full-time with children in which the eldest child was under the age of 13, 74.7 percent reported that they would like to marry,” she said.

“In cases where the eldest child was under the age of five, 80.8 percent selected marriage as their personal choice.

“Given the ongoing opposition to same-sex parenting from certain sectors, perhaps the need to have one's relationship validated is of even greater importance among same-sex couples with young children.

“This is consistent with other findings from the survey which showed that the more same-sex attracted people felt that their relationships were valued on a comparable level with heterosexual relationships the greater their reported level of well-being.”

She said currently the Australian government didn't provide a means for these relationships to be formally recognised at a federal level.

“It seems contradictory that those who are opposed to same-sex couples entering into a legally and socially recognised relationship, such as marriage, argue so based on the well-being of children,” she said.

“Denying parents the opportunity to validate their relationships can send a hurtful message to these young people.

“It implies that the people they rely on for love and protection are depicted by society as being less than capable of providing this.”

She said recent research from America on the impact of marriage on same-sex couples found the large majority reported that their children were happier and better off as a result.

More information: The full report from the Not So Private Lives survey can be viewed at www.notsoprivatelives.com

Provided by University of Queensland

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