

Studying the Same-Sex Studies

News Analysis: Should children's need for stability and a genetic connection take second place to the desires of adults?

by Dale O'Leary

A supposedly groundbreaking, peer-reviewed study, "*When contact changes minds: An experiment on the transmission of gay equality*," (*Science*, Dec.12, 2014) was enthusiastically greeted by social scientists and the media. According to the study, a 20-minute conversation with a "gay marriage" canvasser was sufficient to permanently change the mind of a significant number of people who had previously supported traditional marriage and led them to accept "gay" marriage. The results were surprising, since previous studies had found that changing people's political opinions was extremely difficult. When other researchers, hoping to use the technique on other issues, looked into the data on which the study had been based, they found it was essentially worthless. Further investigation revealed that Michael Le Coeur, one of the original researchers, had faked data. Perhaps if he had been more restrained in his fakery and presented results that were less "groundbreaking," his deceit might have gone unnoticed. The other original researcher, Donald Green, was forced to retract the study, to the great embarrassment of everyone involved.

The question remains: Why did the peer reviewers and editorial staffs not question the results, which were radically different from all previous research in this area? Why were they not skeptical? And how did Le Coeur think he could get away with faked data and manipulated statistics? Perhaps LeCoeur thought that, since other invalid, not-projectable or easily refutable studies supporting the homosexual agenda had been accepted and used in legal briefs and judges' opinions, his study would go unchallenged. For example, activists claimed that 10% of the population was homosexual, using the thoroughly discredited Kinsey study from the 1940s, circulated widely, until the activists were forced to admit in a court brief that it was closer to 2%.

Several scientists have claimed to have found a genetic cause for same-sex attractions; however, all their studies have been discredited. Other studies of identical twins have found that when one twin is same-sex attracted, in only 11% of the pairs so is the other, making it highly unlikely that same-sex attraction is genetically pre-determined. Homosexual-rights activists insist that changing one's pattern of sexual attractions is impossible, which would mean that not one person had ever changed. In doing so, they rejected out of hand numerous studies, personal testimonies and accounts of spontaneous change. A recent study by Diamond, *Sexual Fluidity*, found that for women spontaneous change is relatively common.

Citing a poorly designed study from the 1950s by Evelyn Hooker, which compared 30 carefully screened homosexual men to 30 randomly chosen controls, activists have insisted that persons with SSA are as psychologically stable as the general public. However, numerous more recent studies have found persons who self-identify as same-sex attracted are far more likely to have a variety of problems. A meta-analysis of 25 well-designed studies with a total of 214,344 heterosexuals and 11,971 homosexual persons concluded that same-sex attracted men and women "are at higher risk of mental disorder, suicidal ideation, substance misuse and deliberate self-harm than heterosexual people."

The most egregious manipulation of studies has been the claim made by the American Psychological Association in a 2005 brief, "Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents." The problem with this statement is that none of the 59 studies they referenced actually proved that there was no difference between children of same-sex parents and married heterosexual parents. The problem with all studies of the homosexual community is the difficulty of collecting a truly representative sample. Even if a study begins with a large representative sample of the general public, the percentage of "LGBT" persons is so small that the findings may not be statistically significant. If the researchers collect their sample by soliciting the homosexual community, there is a high probability of volunteer bias.

In their book *No Basis: What the Studies Don't Tell Us About Same-Sex Parenting*, Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai analyzed 33 of the studies and concluded "that the methods used in these studies are so flawed that these studies prove nothing." In every case the sample was so small and so unrepresentative of all same-sex parents that no

conclusion could be drawn. Not all the studies had comparison groups, and those that did used heterosexual single mothers (a clearly disadvantaged group) rather than married biological father and mothers.

Loren Marks also analyzed the 59 studies and concluded that:

"... not one of the 59 studies referenced in the 2005 APA brief compares a large random, representative sample of lesbian or gay parents and their children with a large random, representative sample of married parents and their children. Add up 59 zeros, and you get zero."

On the other hand, there is one study with a larger sample. Mark Regnerus' article, "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the *New Family Structure Study*," compared those brought up in intact biological families to those with same-sex parents, adoptive parents, divorced parents and other arrangements. He concluded that:

"Children appear to be most apt to succeed well as adults — on multiple counts and across a variety of domains — when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father, and especially when the parents remain married to the present day."

Regnerus' study has been criticized for not having a statistically significant sample. However, as it is based on interviews with almost 3,000 adults aged 18-39, of whom 175 reported lesbian mothers and 73 gay fathers, it comes closest to meeting the standard for statistical significance. Rather than parents' opinions, Regnerus used objective adult outcomes, such as having been on public assistance, currently unemployed or ever forced to have sex against their will. Other critics fault Regnerus for comparing intact biological families to children of same-sex attracted women who divorced the fathers of their children. Since they are now acquiring children by artificial insemination donor (AID) and homosexual men by surrogate mothering, the critics claim their children will be spared the trauma of divorce. However, new studies, such as Elizabeth Marquardt and Karen Clark's *My Daddy's Name Is Donor*, suggest that children conceived by AID, whether for a married couple or single woman (same-sex attracted or otherwise), have poorer outcomes than those conceived by natural means. According to Marquardt and Clark:

"... donor offspring are twice as likely as those raised by biological parents to report problems with the law before age 25. They are more than twice as likely to report having struggled with substance abuse. And they are about 1.5 times as likely to report depression or other mental-health problems."

AID children are speaking out, sharing their feelings of loss and demanding to know the identity of their fathers. The fact is that no finding in social science has greater support than that of the value of married biological parents to child well-being. An extensive body of research tells us that children do best when they grow up with both biological parents in a low-conflict marriage. Researchers Kristin Anderson Moore, Susan M. Jekielek and Carol Emig stated in June 2002, "Thus, it is not simply the presence of two parents, as some have assumed, but the presence of two biological parents that seem to support child development (emphasis in original)." It appears that two things are key for a positive outcome: family stability and an unbroken genetic connection with one's biological father and mother.

Same-sex couples may try to supply stability, although many do not. The U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study presented the best-case scenario for children conceived to homosexual women by AID. Seventy-eight children were followed from before AID conception for 17 years. At that time, 56% of the original couples had separated. Same-sex male relationships also are known to be unstable and unfaithful. The homosexual community may believe that if they can just get married and eliminate all "homophobia," all the problems will go away. However, the fact remains that any child acquired by a same-sex couple is by definition separated from one or both biological parents. The genetic connection is broken, and the child experiences that as a loss.

The poignant comedy film *Delivery Man* tells the story of a guy who donates sperm to finance his father and dying mother's trip to Venice. Twenty years later, he discovers he has fathered 533 children, 142 of which are suing to discover his identity. The film ends with a montage of his children making the connection, hugging their father. There is no hint that the parents of these young people didn't try their best; however, their children's need for a genetic connection, the need to know their father and be known by him, remained. The question remains: Should children's need for stability and a genetic connection take second place to the desires of adults, whether heterosexual or homosexual?