

Title: The role of masculine norms in heterosexual men's attitudes towards lesbians.

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Introduction: Male role norms are social norms that men may feel compelled to follow in order to feel or be recognized as masculine. They include anti-femininity, toughness, and status. Research has shown that adherence to male role norms is a predictor of negative attitudes towards gay men, but a gap in the literature exists with regards to how adherence to these norms relates to attitudes towards lesbians. An examination of the relationship between these norms and reported attitudes towards lesbians would shed further light on whether adherence to male role norms influences reported negative attitudes towards lesbians.

Purpose: The present study explores the relationship between attitudes towards lesbians and adherence to the male role norms of anti-femininity, toughness, and status. We hypothesize that adherence to each of the three norms will predict negative attitudes towards lesbians.

Method: An online survey was administered to 135 male undergraduates at a large southeastern university. Correlation and linear regression were used to investigate the relationships between male role norms and attitudes towards lesbians.

Results: Adherence to anti-femininity, toughness and status were significantly and positively correlated with negative attitudes towards lesbians, $r(135) = .46, p < .001$; $r(135) = .23, p = .007$; $r(135) = .33, p < .001$ respectively. Male role norms accounted for 22% (adjusted) of the variance in attitudes, $F(3,131) = 13.63, p < .001$. Adherence to anti-femininity and status norms were significant predictors of negative attitudes, $\beta = .41, t = 4.57, p < .001$, $\beta = .20, t = 2.24, p = .03$; however, adherence to toughness was not a significant predictor, $\beta = -.07, t = -.73, ns$.

Discussion: The results indicate that men who report higher levels of adherence to male role norms are likely to report more negative attitudes towards lesbians. A deeper examination of the causes behind negative attitudes towards lesbians may shed light on the degree to which it is appropriate to examine sexual prejudice towards lesbians as a distinct phenomenon from sexual prejudice against gay men. Future research should address why adherence to the anti-femininity and status norms in particular are predictors of negative attitudes towards lesbians.