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Gay fathers' subjective experience of fatherhood

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2015-08-19
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/18267

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the subjective experiences of gay fathers through a psychoanalytic lens in order to determine if psychoanalytic theories are applicable and useful in understanding the unique social and psychological world of gay fathers. Using a qualitative approach, informed by the method of the Psychoanalytic Research Interview, the participants spoke about their experiences of fatherhood and their understandings of how they integrate their identities as fathers with their identities as gay men. It was found that hegemonic ideas of parenting were hard to challenge directly and identifications with "normality" were common and used defensively, despite evidence that maternal and paternal functions and roles were equally able to be fulfilled by these men. This highlights the need for psychoanalytic theory to deepen its understanding of fatherhood so as to go beyond gendered stereotypes and find a more nuanced language for describing fatherhood.

Keywords: Fathers, Fatherhood, Gay, Homosexual, Family, Psychoanalysis, Adoption