

### **Research objective**

The aim of the project was to take a closer look on the relationship between the stress experienced as a consequence of being a member of socially stigmatised group, and the health condition. Previous studies indicate that health problems are more likely to occur in social groups that fall victim to lack of social acceptance, homosexual individuals being no exception.

There is a tendency to ascribe the increased probability of being struck by such a disease to the so called minority stress. Being exposed to social prejudice results in constant strain which contributes to deterioration of health condition. Minority stress adds up to everyday strain. It is chronic in character and typical exclusively of minority populations.

Although studies on minority stress have been conducted for over a decade, the very mechanisms of it still elude our grasp. It is especially true for such biological aspects of responding to stress as the changes in hormone levels, which are responsible for controlling the reaction. Cortisol in one of such hormones commonly studied in stress studies. Body of research shows that experiencing chronic stress is related to changes in daily cortisol secretion patterns and its reactivity to acute stress. This project will explore the latter during laboratory observation.

### **Methods to be used**

This study will be conducted in a laboratory. During two laboratory sessions saliva samples will be collected from each of 120 participants to determine cortisol secretion patterns among participants. Participants will also fill questionnaires on stress experiences, health and health-related factors. Only men will be included in the sample. The analysis will focus on mapping the associations between stress, cortisol levels, health and health-related factors.

### **Reasons for undertaking the study**

The understanding of health and its determinants in minority populations is important not only for scientific, but also for social reasons. It is estimated that this problem may concern several million Polish citizens. Health deterioration in sexual minorities translates into costs of healthcare and lower productivity of a significant group of people. Hence, the results of the research will be invaluable for public health policy planning.