**BACKGROUND**

As more is understood about homosexuality it is becoming popular for even the strongest of anti-gay activists to concede to the possibility that homosexuality is not a conscious choice. As a result, some have hypothesized that it is the result of an interaction between both inherited temperament and certain social and/or environmental factors. In the late seventies, Dr. Tim LaHaye (1978) wrote a book which suggested that “people with a melancholy temperament have a greater tendency toward homosexuality than people of other temperament groups.” Recently embracing a form of this theory has been the popular Christian psychologist Dr. James Dobson (2001) and his non-profit organization Focus on the Family.

This study empirically examined specifically whether melancholy temperament has a substantial effect on the sexual orientation of males in order to determine the validity of LaHaye (1978) and Dobson’s (2001) theory and did so using survey methodology.

**HYPOTHESIS**

There is a significant correlation between melancholy temperament and male homosexuality.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Previous research has attempted to understand homosexuality for many reasons. For example, some research has evaluated whether personality (level of openness to experience) influences a favorable attitude toward homosexuality (Shackelford & Besser, 2007) and also whether having older brothers increases the probability of homosexuality in later-born males (Blanchard & Bogaert, 1996). However, no research seems to specifically evaluate a potential relationship between temperament and homosexuality; specifically that of melancholy temperament leading to male homosexuality.

**METHODOLOGY**

Male subjects, 18 years of age and older, capable of giving informed consent, were recruited for this study. Their data was collected using a survey created and posted on www.surveymonkey.com. Subjects were recruited to participate via electronic invitations (e.g., emails, online bulletins and blogs).

In order to measure the temperament of those tested, subjects self-reported using the Temperament Inventory (Cruise & Blitchington, 1979), a questionnaire made up of 80 true/false questions.

In order to measure the sexuality of those tested, subjects self-reported using Kinsey’s Continuum of Sexual Orientation Scale (Crooks & Baur, 2005).

**RESULTS**

Data was collected and analyzed (n=38) using the nonparametric Kendall’s tau-b Correlation (t=0.057; accounting for only 0.32% of variance) and Pearson’s Product Moment Coefficient (r=0.055; accounting for only 0.30% of variance). As a result, it was revealed that melancholy temperament had a minimal effect on each subject’s sexual orientation.

In addition, it was discovered that none of the four temperaments (melancholy, choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic) had a significant effect on sexual orientation. In other words, each variable had a minimal impact on the other. In this study, significant effect size was determined using Cohen’s (1988) theory of significance.

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of this study, there does not appear to be a significant or meaningful correlation between temperament and sexual orientation, as would be necessary if a melancholy temperament predisposed males toward homosexuality. In fact, there does not appear to be a significant correlation between any of the four temperaments (e.g., melancholy, choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic) and sexual orientation.

Though research findings were based on a small population (n=38) some substantial effect size should have been noted in order to validate the hypothesis that there is a relationship between temperament and sexual orientation.

The preliminary results of this study should cause one to question the validity of LaHaye (1978) and Dobson’s (2001) theory which suggests that a significant relationship exists between melancholy temperament and homosexuality.

**REFERENCES**


