

# This Week's Citation Classic

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Bieber I, Dain H J, Dince P R, Drellich M G, Grand H G, Gundlach R H, Kremer M W, Rifkin A H, Wilbur C B & Bieber T B. *Homosexuality: a psychoanalytic study*. New York: Basic Books, 1962. 358 p.

This study demonstrated the influence of specific types of disordered parent-child relationships in the genesis of male homosexuality, particularly the salience of defective father-son inter-relatedness, and it identified a continuity of disturbed relations with other males in childhood and preadolescence. [The *Science Citation Index*® (SCI)® and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI)™ indicate that this book has been cited over 300 times since 1962.]

Irving Bieber  
132 East 72nd Street  
New York, NY 10021

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"In 1952 when I organized a psychoanalytic research team, I was research neuropsychiatrist at Memorial Hospital and Sloan Kettering Institute investigating with several others the psychological effects of cancer surgery, but for some time I had wanted to tap the reservoir of data that psychoanalysts are privy to. They gather vast amounts of detailed information about human behavior but with rare exceptions clinical reports are by single practitioners on individual cases or small samples.

"I recruited a research group from an organization to which I belong, the Society of Medical Psychoanalysts. Eight psychiatrists and an invited psychologist, each a practicing psychoanalyst, constituted the team. When we were ready to put our data together, a social psychologist-psychoanalyst joined us.

"The topic of homosexuality was chosen because it could be defined operationally, diagnosed without ambiguity, and it allowed for confidence that the syndrome was represented by the sample. We defined a

homosexual as an adult who had repetitive sexual experiences with same-sex partners, and a heterosexual as a sexually active adult who did not participate in homosexual behavior. In all, 77 of about 100 Society members answered three questionnaires containing 500 items concerning 106 homo- and 100 heterosexual male analyses.

"The research group met weekly at my apartment for nine years. We designed the questionnaires, collected and assessed data, discussed inferences, and worked together in an atmosphere of congeniality and cooperation. The entire study cost about \$5,000 but the labor was free, including the editing and a lot of typing. All royalties went to the Society for future research.

"The publication contributed initially by helping to break the silence about homosexuality in the media. The study successfully tapped the experience of many psychoanalysts, permitted a rigorous evaluation of theory and clinical process, documented specific parent-child patterns in the background of male homosexuals, emphasized the signal importance of the father in sexual outcome, and delineated developmental characteristics of the pre-homosexual child. Results of treatment showed that about one-third shifted to exclusive heterosexuality.

"In 1964 we received from the American Psychiatric Association the Hofheimer Award for Research, Honorable Mention, a category created for this study. Our work has provided a major data base for other investigators and several who used our questionnaire on non-patient homosexuals produced findings consistent with ours. A negative reception came from activist homosexual groups and others committed to the position that homosexuality is but one adaptation in the broad spectrum of normal sexuality. However, until solid evidence shows homosexuality to be other than an adaptation to pathological childhood experiences, our study stands."