**Scientific abstract –** **Nurses' Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Behaviors in Supporting Lesbian and Gay (LG) Parents at** **Mother and Child Health Clinics, and LG Parents' Experiences**

Despite the increasing numbers of LGBT people becoming parents in Western countries in recent years, only a few studies have explored the experiences of these parents in seeking healthcare for their children. Additionally, limited research has explored the experiences and competency of healthcare professionals to work with these families. The overall picture portrayed by the existing research underscores the negative experiences encountered by LGBT parents within maternal and child healthcare settings, as well as healthcare providers’ acknowledgment of their lack of knowledge, skills, and confidence in assisting LGBT-parent families. To the best of our knowledge, however, no previous study has addressed the experiences of Israeli LGBT parents seeking healthcare for their children, nor has it explored the experiences and competency of Israeli healthcare providers in assisting LGBT-parent families within the context of Mother-Child Health Clinics (MCHCs). The proposed study seeks to fill this void by focusing on Israeli cisgender lesbian mothers and gay fathers, who have served as the focal point of studies on LGBT-parent families in Israel, and nurses in MCHCs, who serve as primary health providers in these settings. The study draws on two theoretical frameworks – the minority stress model and the concept of cultural competency - to investigate the healthcare experiences of LG parents within MCHCs, and the experiences and competency of MCHCs’ nurses to support LG-parent families, respectively.

The study will employ a convergent parallel mixed-methods design comprised of (1) 40 in-depth semi-structured interviews with LG parents, both single and coupled, utilizing MCHCs services; (2) 40 in-depth semi-structured interviews with MCHCs’ nurses from the 7 districts of the Ministry of Health and the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa Municipality; and (3) a quantitative survey of 200 MCHCs’ nurses from the locations noted above designed, among other things, to assess their cultural competence to work with LG-parent families, and identify the variables predicting their practice behaviors with these families.

By examining the experiences of MCHCs’ nurses in supporting LG-parent families alongside the healthcare experiences of LG parents within MCHCs, our research is expected to provide a comprehensive and holistic perspective on the interactions between nurses and parents within the MCHC context. From a theoretical standpoint, the research will enhance our understanding of the dynamics and the micro- and macro-level factors (such as organizational and social-level factors) shaping these interactions. By investigating the competency of MCHCs’ nurses in providing care for LG-parent families, the research is also expected to add a valuable dimension to our understanding of the healthcare process encountered by both nurses and parents. In practical terms, the research findings may inform and assist health policy-makers as well as nurses working directly with LG parents and their children.

The contribution of the proposed research may extend beyond the specific case of LG-parent families in the context of MCHCs, as it may enhance our understanding of the ways in which sexual minority status shapes the interactions between sexual minority individuals and healthcare providers.