

'Imagine a date where you find yourself being told 'OH BABZ! PEE! BRB! Tmi?': Deaf gay men and their use of dating apps to (not) meet men.

The emergence and development of technology and geo-social networking apps has changed the way men meet other men for friendship, dates or sex. Undoubtedly, the largest and most popular platform facilitating this activity is Grindr. They promote themselves as 'a global community for men of all backgrounds to connect with one another.' (Grindr LLC, n.d.) This sounds like the ideal world but unfortunately, this is not the case for many Deaf men using these apps.

Research conducted by Goedel & Duncan (2015) showed that 38% of hearing men reported using these apps to meet new sexual partners. This contrasts to the research I conducted with a sample of Deaf men who reported that making friends (22%) and having dates (19%) were the overarching motivations for use. In addition, I also found that only 10% of the Deaf gay men 'often' met men after chatting, which begs the question of how the Deaf men are making friends or going on dates if they are not meeting?

This presentation will provide evidence as to the reasons these apps are not serving the Deaf community in ways they aim to serve the hearing community and suggest ways in which improvements could be made.

Biography: Paul is a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter and part-time PhD student at Durham University and has been working with the Deaf community for 12 years. His previous research focused on the identity, culture and language of the Deaf gay male community.