



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
**CENTER FOR**  
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Smart Technology

# The HealthTech Update

August 27, 2019

Spotlight on:  
César Escobar-Viera, MD, PhD



César Escobar-Viera is a postdoctoral associate at the Center for Research on Media, Technology, and Health. He was a practicing psychiatrist in Paraguay before coming to the U.S. in 2009 to complete his Master's and PhD degrees at the University of Florida. Dr. Escobar-Viera's current research focuses on improving mental health outcomes and access among sexual and gender minorities through the use of social media.

See a preview of our interview with Dr. Escobar-Viera and read the full interview below!

**CBHST: What inspired your interest in improving mental health access among sexual and gender minority youth in rural areas?**

My interest in working with sexual and gender minorities is closely related to the social media component of my work. Research shows that these populations use social media a lot, but they also often face discrimination and rejection on many social media platforms. Still, they continue to use social media to combat social isolation. This is especially true in geographically isolated environments. Although urban LGBTQ+ populations also face many challenges, they often have more resources available to them than those living in rural areas. Youth face these challenges even more than adults, because their sexual orientations are often newly discovered and they do not yet have all the tools that adults use to connect with other people. There are also huge mental health disparities between sexual and gender minorities and the rest of the population, specifically in terms of depression, anxiety, and suicidality. Combined, all of these factors make rural LGBTQ+ youth an incredibly vulnerable population.

**Full Interview**

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**Questions? Comments? Suggestions?**

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