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Happy Pride!

From JIPMER Students

Sunday, July 4, 2021

Volume 2 Issue 4



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*PRIDE 2021*

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Illustration by  
Pooja P S, 2K20



## A Beginning



Illustrated by  
Hasitha Tipparaju, 2k19



Illustrated by  
Baidehi Sikder, 2k20



Illustrated by  
Namitha N S, 2k20

Life as we live today is quite different from the one that we grew up in. Most of us were born around the break of this millennium or even before: when Pride and its associated pronouns were not popularly known and discussed; at least not in India. Whatever was said, was definitely not in a positive light, and always in hushed tones. But young minds are fertile and receptive to new ideas and concepts. Hence, our generation (or at least most of it), while growing up and learning the ways of the world, embraced the idea of love in all its forms - prioritized and appreciated individual happiness above all else. The concept of normalizing love between two consensual adults, no matter what their orientation or preference is - not restricting love to mere pre-defined gender roles, for the sole purpose of procreation, is an idea that has begun taking ground, and has received worldwide acceptance.

In this special edition of Bonfire, we bring to you, stories from around the campus. Narratives and experiences of people around us, our peers and colleagues who belong to the LGBTQ+ community. This issue is filled with real life stories, articles, trivia and games, all aimed at celebrating the Pride month. As the editor of this edition, bringing together in words so many emotions, sensitive as they are in nature, was no easy task. We have tried to the best of our knowledge and understanding to bring to life the positivity that is synonymous with the celebration of Pride. However, we are open to learn and be educated further on the matter, by our dear readers.

This issue, unlike any other, has a lot of beautiful works by people who requested us to keep their identity concealed. They are our colleagues and wonderful human beings, whose rights to privacy and anonymity are being respected and strictly protected by Team Bonfire. We would like our readers to do the same. Prejudice and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community is still widely prevalent in the society – hence it is our duty to protect and shield our loved ones from the same.

In the interest of trying to understand the struggles with bias, bigotry and trauma that our contemporaries from the Community face, I urge you to keep reading this issue. Its high time we hear those, whose voices are forcefully hushed – those who *need* to be heard. Bonfire, through this special edition, has tried to provide a platform for just that.

In closing, I would like to heartily thank all those who contributed to this special edition, every team member who worked with tender care and consideration to make this issue a successful one and all those who are reading this publication. Let us collectively take steps forward and strive for a better tomorrow towards free, fluid and fair love.

Please do email us at [bonfire@jipmer.net](mailto:bonfire@jipmer.net), for any suggestions, corrections and/or feedback.

- Nistha Lahiri,  
Secretary,  
Team Bonfire

- **Reopening of OPD's:** As of 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2021, OPD's at JIPMER have been partially opened, for about 150 people per department per day, with the provision that all COVID-19 related guidelines should be followed.
- **Celebrating International Yoga Day:** JIPMER honored the 7<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2021 with a webinar programme on the topic 'Management of Stress of Healthcare Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic-Role of Yoga,' which featured various eminent faculty who have experience in ACYTER.
- **Surgeons Sweep in Accolades:** In the Virtual Digestive Disease Week and SSAT conference based in USA, Dr. A.R. Pranavi presented an awardwinning paper on a Randomised Control Trial in patients undergoing emergency laparotomy for peritonitis, comparing the standard care to adapted Enhanced Recovery after Surgery Pathway, which is the first time an Asian paper has received the coveted award in 15 years. Dr. Gurushankari Balakrishnan and Dr. Sinduja Ramanan won the Poster of Distinction and Quick Shot Oral Presentation for their presentations on 'Hanger Based vs Conventional feeding in moderate and severe pancreatitis' and 'Risk of sarcopenia in predicting post-operative morbidity and peri-operative mortality in a patient undergoing elective surgery for Gastric cancer' respectively.
- **Exam Check:** The theory and practical examination timetables of the following batches have been uploaded on the JIPMER website:



MSc. Nursing  
 MSc. (MLT- Microbiology and MLT-Pathology)  
 MSc. Medical Physiology  
 MSc. Medical Biochemistry  
 Cardiac Electrophysiology and Pacing  
 Candidates are advised to check their requisite schedules on the website.

## BOOK REVIEW-LOVELESS BY ALICE OSBORNE



For a book that has a title outright screaming that it isn't about love, and an asexual aromantic main protagonist to boot, Loveless is a book that explores love in many ways, perhaps not the conventional definition of love, but love nonetheless.

All of our characters in this book are in their late teens, beginning college, 'out in the real world' for the first time, exploring themselves in more ways than one. Much like their sexualities, each of them has a varied approach to life, giving the story a wonderfully real feeling.

The story begins with Georgia, our main protagonist, going to the last function of her high school years, needled by her best friend to finally kiss her crush. For a girl who thrives on romantic fanfiction as herself, Georgia imagines that would be easy enough. Alas, it is not so. She has a visceral revolted reaction to the kiss she had been highly anticipating, and that forces herself to begin her re-evaluation of herself, of her tentative steps towards self-discovery.

In spite of this initial setback, she convinces herself that university is her chance to redeem herself, to find the man of her dreams. As life goes on, however, she discovers, slowly, painfully at times and in oddly fulfilling ways at other times, that such a thing might not be for her.

Even though Georgia's are the eyes we see the story through, the author has taken care to give other characters, Georgia's friends and her mentors, rounded personalities and journeys of their own.

I found this book a beautiful and nuanced portrayal of the asexual-aromantic spectrum, something which is sorely needed, as people who fall under this part of the spectrum are often misrepresented by a society that often makes romance to be the be-all and end-all of emotional expression. The platonic relationships in this book are wonderfully shown, the facets of a beautiful friendship masterfully displayed.

Sexuality and sexual expression, even though it makes up a large part of the story, is not all there is to this book. It questions a lot of practices that are considered 'normal' in the society, such as the mentality of equating drinking/clubbing to a progressive nature, or the implicit peer pressure to fit in with relationships, indeed the idea of 'normalcy' itself is questioned, and with good reason, for the point the book tries to make is that there are many ways to be progressive, not necessarily the way everyone else goes (for example, a non-drinking introverted asexual aromantic person can be progressive, too, in her own way, like Georgia).

The one flaw of this book, if it can be counted as a flaw, is the slightly juvenile prose, which, I suppose, is expected for a young adult novel. Except for that one slight hitch, Loveless is a must read for all those people who feel they might not be fitting in with what is considered normal, both in romantic situations and in life itself, because it teaches you that love is not romance alone, that you don't need to 'fit in' to be valid, that you will find friends and peers who value you for the person you are, irrespective of how 'weird' other people may find you to be, that it is alright to stand out from the society at large, which is a lesson that can be an integral self-confidence boost for teens and young adults who are struggling with their identity.

Definitely a book to watch out for!

-Nilanee V S  
2k19

## “My sexuality is my sexuality. None of your sexuality.”

That was my closing statement in an argument, where I had for the first time sternly stood up against casual homophobia. Now people who know me can certify that, I was neither a rebel, nor was I brave. I was rather extremely anxious and scared—of being called names, of being discriminated, of being left alone.

And this fear had chased me throughout my life. It still does at times. Growing up in a small suburb, all I had ever heard about people like me was, how it wasn't normal to be attracted to someone of the same sex, how it was a 'disease' which needed to be fixed. I no longer even remember what came first—the fear or the closet, but I do remember spending the entirety of my adolescence succumbing to both, hiding, hating myself, consciously filtering every word and action of mine.

It wasn't until I left my hometown for college that I slowly started accepting myself and opened myself up. It was only then that I realised, life isn't exactly as depressing as they show in those stereotypical gay movies.

I can recall talking to members from the LGBTQIA+ community on the Internet for hours during my initial semesters. They were mostly strangers, yet they were extremely supportive and motivating. Hearing about their journeys, knowing their struggles imbibed enough confidence in me to come out to my best friends. They had hugged me and said that they would always love me for the person I am, and not the person I choose to love. Most people in college were very accepting as well and all the support from my peers, eventually gave me the courage to come out to my parents. To say that you are bisexual in an Indian household is indeed a big deal, but I thank God for providing me with parents who accept me for who I am.

There was no turning back, nor denying my sexuality ever, after that day.

Why am I saying all this?

Because 'coming out' is a big, nerve-racking decision for all of us. And I want to give you hope that there will always be people who will love you, accept you, and stand by you no matter what happens and who you choose to love. Sure, there will also be a section of the society that will throw 'fag', 'chakka' and other derogatory slurs at you. But I hope you soar to such unprecedented heights, that you are too high to hear those voices.

Happy Pride. :)

*Illustrated by Baidehi Sikder, 2k20*

**-Akash Choudhury  
2k17**



## The Closet; and A Love Letter from Outside of It

I would tell you how I realised I was a lesbian, but I don't know because I kept moving in and out of denial for seven years. Seven years of lying awake at night unable to keep my thoughts from wandering. I hoped that ignoring those thoughts or forcing myself to feel attraction for boys would help, but things just kept getting steadily worse. So, there I was, in the first year of medical college, in a pit of depression, suffering so much anxiety that I couldn't stand the thought of going outside, deeply ashamed.

Okay, let's go back. Ever since I was young, before I even suspected that I might not be straight, I used to feel like a predator for simply being around others of my gender. I didn't hug them; I didn't hold hands; I never showed them much affection because the thought of being the cause for women to feel unsafe was unbearable to me. I felt like I was an invader of their spaces; I sometimes felt like I was masquerading as a girl because I didn't think I was allowed, as a female, to feel things for others of the same gender. As I became older and more unable to ignore those feelings, as I became increasingly isolated from everyone around me and detached from myself, I had no choice but to face the truth. There was a tiny sliver of a chance that I maybe wasn't succeeding at living the heterosexual life.

And, of course, I tried to slip back into denial. I constructed this flimsy web of lies to convince myself that I wasn't queer. "I'm only attracted to women because women are hyper-sexualised by male filmmakers, and this makes me a bad feminist." "I'm only doing this because I'm sad and need attention, and I'm being disrespectful to the 'actual' LGBT community by pretending I'm one of them." After I came to the point where I couldn't deny it anymore, I began to feel that by hiding such a big secret about myself, I was deceiving my family, and that meant I didn't love them.

I tell you this not because I need pity. I don't think true acceptance can ever come from pity. I tell you this because I hope you might listen and understand. My sexuality isn't about 'what I do/want to do in the bedroom'. It isn't about the pain I went through either. It's about who I love, how I love; and it's a part of my humanity. I could do an extended Q and A session about debating homophobes, but I don't think anything could come out of it; because how can you ever prove your humanity to someone? I can only say this: my trouble with my sexuality is negligible compared to what most other queer people go through. I never feared for my life; I never feared for my career or my home; I'm one of the lucky ones. But no one should have to go through any of this. No one should have to spend their lives thinking of themselves as a horrible, vile thing stomping around in a skin suit. For that is what happens when we are taught to hate ourselves without even knowing why.

Finally, one day, I just became tired of making my world so small and meaningless, and I simply could not take it anymore. I came out to myself as a lesbian. And once I admitted it to myself, I felt like I could breathe freely again. I didn't have to obsess over every single thought I had and micro-analyse it anymore. When it was night, I could just... sleep.

Over the next few months, my depression lifted, and I finally had a sense of clarity.

So much of what held me back earlier now seems silly. The time I had been in the closet, I used to think I was destined to suffer. I was miserable for years because for so long, I simply could not imagine a possible future where I would no longer be in pain. And when I came out to myself, it was like my world just opened up. I didn't have to deceive myself anymore. As I realised all the ways the closet had stifled me, as I realised that I was allowed to take up space in the world, I was overcome with an intense love for all the people around me and the world I was living in. As I let the part of myself which loved in **this** particular way settle in with the rest of me, all other kinds of love I felt towards all the other people, which had previously been hazy and veiled, came into sharp focus. And past the numbness, I realised just how much I cared.

I love you all so very much. Happy Pride.



*Illustrated by Namitha N S, 2k20*

## No apologies for who I am

Why don't straight people ever have to 'come out'? Mom, Dad, I'm straight! <insert family drama> Why is the 'conventional straight' the default? Why do heterosexuals have it so easy?

I have been wondering about these for over a week now. Before you start saying things like, "straights have it hard too", "homosexuals want drama and attention", I would like to remind you that not everything is about *you*.

It is time for you to accept the fact that, there are some fairly unexplored sections of society that need reform. Far more than the conventional society does. So, when the topic of LGBTQIA+ is discussed, kindly listen to the discussion, and to the people from the community, who *need* to be heard. We don't want to fight over whose life is more complicated. We are fighting for a much bigger cause and for greater good.

Yes, there are gay people (among other LGBTQIA+ people) in JIPMER – I hope that this information is not shockingly new to you. Unfortunately, bisexual People like me experience discrimination from both the straight and gay communities. Some heterosexuals assume that, a bisexual is just a straight guy 'experimenting' with gay sex. In contrast, some homosexual people believe that I'm gay but having heterosexual relationships because apparently, I'm afraid of 'coming out' or 'accepting my sexual orientation'.

I have matched with several JIPMERites on online dating sites like, tinder and bumble - most of them being college seniors and residents. Yet, I've never dared to ask anybody out on a date or even for coffee, because of the prevalent homophobia that *you* normalized. The root of homophobia, in my view, lies at - being ignorant and lacking proper awareness and education. From seniors who think gay tasks are a 'fun way to interact' to professors who claim it to be 'a mental illness' - I can only imagine the outrage and animosity that would have broken out if we treated straight people the same way they treat us. It's all fun and games until the whisperings are about you - which is when they're devastating!



The majority of the 'conventional straights' are extremely ignorant. They make no effort to understand what it means or how it feels to belong to the Spectrum. So, I want all the homophobes, ignorant neutrals and unopinionated youth to know that, *you* played a part in spoiling the emotional and mental health of me and others like me. *You* simply made no attempt to understand us – you shrugged your shoulders and took to heel. I'm angry and disappointed. After all, you chose to remain quiet, only because you thought it is not your problem; because you thought that it's just an opinion, and it is not a matter of enough significance for you to speak up about.

People like me don't have the privilege of holding hands with or dating a person from the same gender, openly. For an Institute of National Importance like JIPMER, it's a sorry state of affairs. If the 'elite' of the society – Doctors, who treat patients irrespective of their background, were to speak discriminatively about people with unconventional orientations, it isn't surprising that the mass of the society makes no effort to understand us.

If life is resistance, then very existence is political. I've grown up believing LGBTQ+ is normal. Not because my parents told me, not because some media showed me, not even because my school taught me, it is only because *it was* and *it is*, who I am.

Yet, I don't feel any hatred or disgust towards *you*. If only *you* could do the same and make this short life of ours, a happy one to live. If you could try and not be ignorant and at least acknowledge our presence, where accepting us may be a long shot for now. Imagine our lives where every living day we pretend to be someone else, someone who we are not, just to please society. It's very tiring. You will know, if you put yourself in our shoes, *for once*.

Make a change, be the change.

Peace.

- Your Next-Door LGBTQ+ guy

Illustrated by Pooja P S, 2k20

## Out of place

You all remember that first person you fancied, right? In all its innocence, without any knowledge about what love is, when you were embarrassed and self-conscious without knowing why? I was 6 years old - the first person I felt that way for, looking back all these years, was a guy. Since I was a child, I have been ingrained with the notion that you can love in only one way. It has been broadcast time and again that there are some forms of love that are right, and some that are looked down upon. I believe that this is where the problem that queer folks face in society begins - with their upbringing. You start facing questions that you want answers to, about yourself. But unfortunately, there is no way to answer them, because these questions are hushed and not meant to be asked.



As I grew up, I started to see that all along. I often felt the same way about boys that I felt about girls, and I realised that I didn't fit the mould that society had created for me. Slowly, due to society becoming more accepting towards queer folks and their identities, I was finally able to question the beliefs that I had about myself all along. I realised, looking back on things, that I was different from who society wanted me to be, and that's okay.

I still have thoughts, even after I finally found out this large aspect of who I really am, about whether it really is the truth or not. It happens due to all those years of me being told that it is something unnatural or bad; being called gay in a derogatory manner in middle school. I was made to believe that attraction towards persons of the same gender is somehow wrong, insulting and something to be ashamed of.

It is still something I am trying to wrap my head around today. You often begin to question whether this is really who you are or if you are doing it for all the 'attention', as queer folks are often perceived to be attention seeking by society and are expected to fit a specific stereotype as is depicted in various media sources. The truth is that no two people have the same experiences in this regard. Many bisexual men are depicted as effeminate, flamboyant and attracted to everyone. Unfortunately, I very often see people around me having this view of bisexual men because of all these media depictions of them. Sure, it may be true for some of the people who identify as such, but this stereotype is very restricting.

Labels have their upsides and downsides; they often easily help you express who you are, but sometimes they also act as a tool for others to put you in a box. Personally, I like to think of myself as a regular person, somewhere in between, just trying to get through life peacefully, where people judge me based on my own behavior, rather than the mould that society has made for folks who love in similar ways that I do. I am afraid of this restricting stereotype, and it is the reason why I choose to never draw attention to my sexuality in public. For me, it is something that is deeply personal, and something that only those close to me have any business knowing.

I must say that although my journey in rediscovering this aspect of myself was in no way ideal, there are people who have it far worse than I have had. There are people who unfortunately don't have a support system or anyone to rely on during this eye-opening period of self-discovery; people whose governments put them to death for identifying in a certain way. The way non-binary people are treated many a times is downright appalling and something that we should be ashamed of today, as a 'progressive' society. I feel like it is our duty to listen to others around us, queer or not, without stereotyping them or expecting them to behave in certain ways; and judge them by their own behavior, actions and their very human self.

*Illustrated by  
Hasitha Tipparaju, 2k19*

## Acceptance



June - the Pride month. Pride is a word that, in general, makes us hold our heads high. In the context of celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community however, Pride is a word that has multiple facets, almost a spectrum of its own.

An often-seen line in literature is this 'Man is a social animal', meaning that, for most of us, perhaps all of us, fitting in with others is a primary objective. We usually flock to people like our own selves, we celebrate the familiar, revel in the comfort of the known.

As we get accustomed to the idea of Pride, there is a growing chorus of freedom, as people exult in their own new-found identities and acceptance. This is a phenomenon that is liberating and hence much appreciable. However, we need to consider that broaching a topic as sensitive as curiosity about belonging to the LGBTQIA spectrum is a path strewn with obstacles for many. This issue is largely due to our conservative society, which also makes finding information about such 'taboo' topics very difficult.

Knowing that pertinent issue and having gone through (perhaps still going through) the identity crisis many of us do before inhabiting an identity that is comfortable to claim as ours, I want to, as a writer and a friend, say that it is okay. Okay to experiment with yourself, to explore parts of yourself you may not be entirely comfortable with. It is also okay if the identity/sexuality that you identify with right now is actually just a phase and not who you will be in the future.

It's okay to be confused and to take your time, to seek out answers. Just as the relief of finally belonging to a sect of humanity where you are comfortable in, is a relief, the journey that takes you there, of self-discovery, is important too.

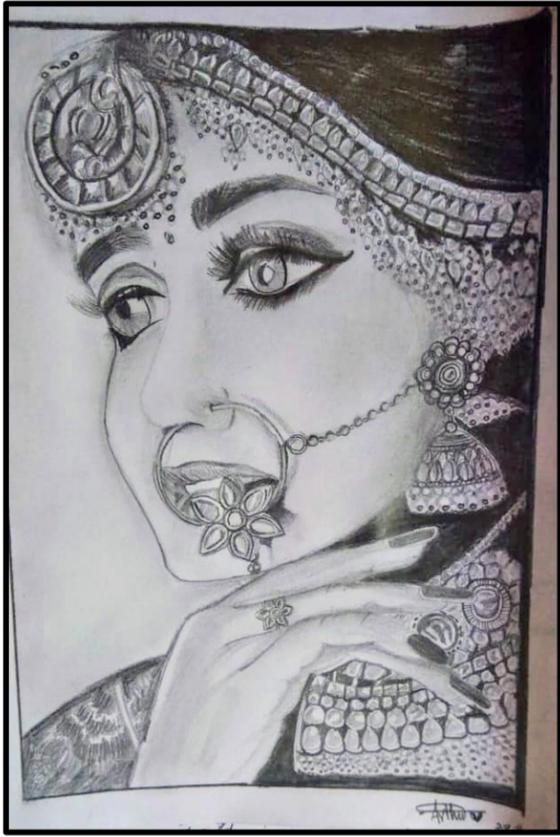
Above all, it's okay if you're unsure. It's okay if you keep your identity hidden in a small part of your being, to keep yourself safe. Prejudices and stereotypes exist everywhere, and while we might wish to have the courage to break them all at once, usually in life, real change occurs by taking baby steps.

It is a baby step we are taking, to extend our support to those of our brothers, sisters and others who might not prefer either of those terms and loudly say that they, and their identities, in fact, we and our identities, are all valid. Identities may be fluid, and they may change as we grow and learn, but as long as we are working towards who we want to become, as we explore and change, we will still belong. Pride belongs to each and every one of us, those of us on the spectrum, those who are curious about it, the allies that stand by us, all of us who make our identities a thing to be proud of.

No matter what, each of us is valid for who we are and how we choose to identify ourselves

-V.S. Nilanee  
2k19

Illustrated by Gayathri Sreekumar, 2k20



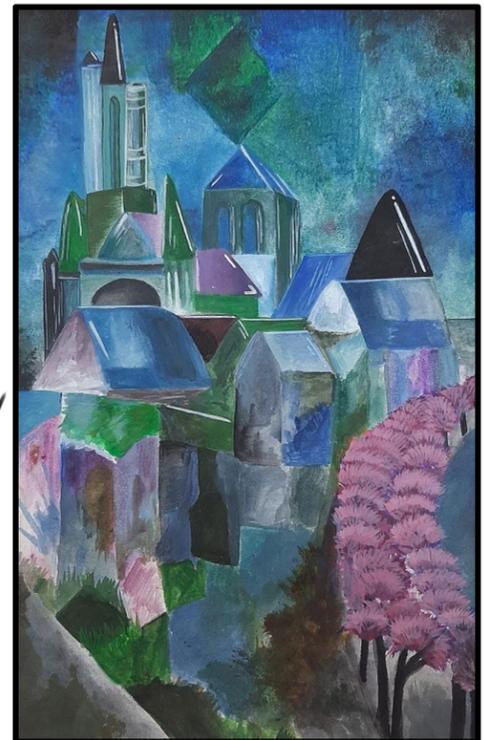
-Arthi  
2k17



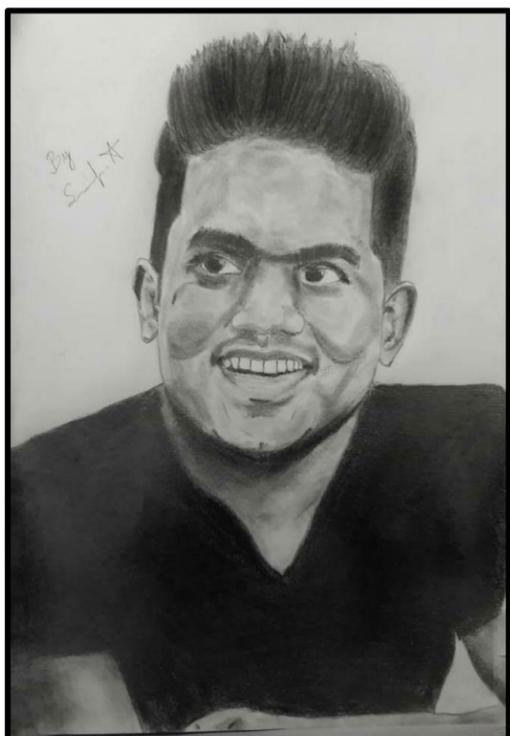
-Hamdan Rishin  
2k19



-Dr Vinu Priya  
SR, Dept of Dermatology



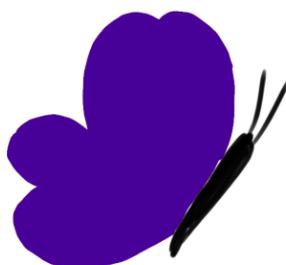
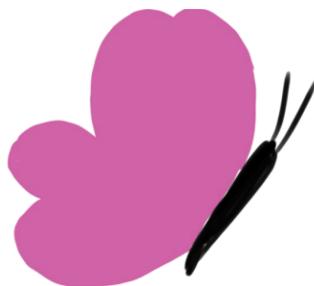
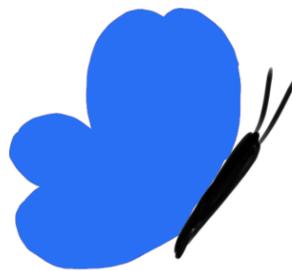
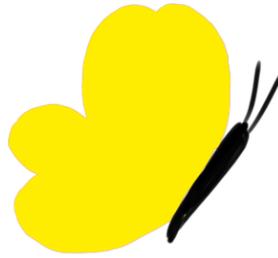
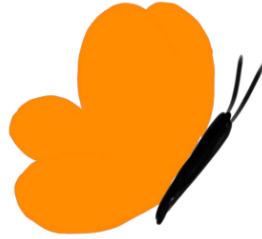
-Hasitha Tipparaju  
2k19



-Sarandev  
2k18



-Himadri Sarkar  
2k17





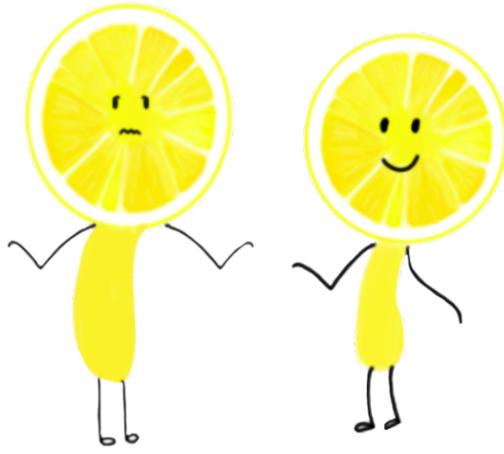
**Can we self-assess our mental health? How accurate will that be?**

There are self-rated instruments that have been designed. However, the practical yardstick that you can use is, "Can I handle this alone?" Or, "Do I need friends/family/professionals to help me?". If you think you need help, you go ahead and ask! Every one of us faces difficulties, every one of us may need help and support and there is nothing to be ashamed about seeking help.



**How to prevent short term depression from turning into long term depression?**

Know that the joys and sorrows we experience are merely fleeting touches upon us (like waves of the ocean that lash the shores). Having this attitude of forbearance helps us to shake out of the short-term sadness quickly. Having a sense of gratitude for what we have in our lives keeps sadness away. Engaging in social service helps. Having timely meals, avoiding junk food, high fat and high cholesterol food; & having adequate sleep at night (especially the 10 pm to 4 am window) is essential for our mood. Avoid alcohol, cannabis, other drugs or medications. These are highly addictive and worsen your psychological well-being.



Break free from the vicious cycle of worries/negativity/depression through the practice of pranayama and meditation.



**I have questions regarding my sexuality- I think I might be on the asexual spectrum but I'm not sure if I'm ace or I just have less exposure. How do I tell? I've never experienced any classical signs of being sexually attracted to anyone. Being unsure of my orientation makes me feel out of place among my peers?**

Adolescence is well known for being the time that one discovers important parts of one's identity such as sexuality. Regardless of what you may be experiencing in relation to your sexuality, you do not have to go through this alone. Understanding your sexuality through questioning is a perfectly healthy activity and talking about it with other people can help you to work through this period more effectively. Discuss the issue with someone whom you can trust, feel comfortable with, and has your best interests in mind. Just focus on sharing your feelings with them and telling them that you are unsure about your orientation. Give it adequate time; do not feel pressured to walk away from the conversation with a label; you have enough time to figure that out. The use of imagery/fantasy to see what resonates with you may assist in the process of discovery. In the event that these steps are not adequate, you may consider speaking to a professional. There are also helplines set up by NGOs and sup-

port groups, that aim to increase knowledge and reduce apprehension about the social narrative around alternative sexuality, which you can consider reaching out to.



Question 1 and 2: Answered by Dr Balaji Bharadwaj, Dept of Psychiatry, JIPMER

Question 3: Answered by Dr Vikas Menon, Dept of Psychiatry, JIPMER

Illustrated by Avisha Bazroy, 2k20

**NOTE:** Questions are compiled from suggestions by students. Students can submit their questions at <https://bonfire.jipmer.net/student-query/>

Multiple questions from student entry form are compiled into questions for publication. Appropriate expert is chosen to provide the answers to the questions. *The selection of questions for publication and experts are purely editorial.*

For immediate help during crisis, JIPMER Students, residents and faculty must use the following services:

**JIPMER Crisis Helpline (24x7)**  
Call: **780-691-3160**

**Students' Wellness Center**  
Student Counsellors are available every working day from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Students' Wellness Center  
Third Floor, Jipmer Academic Center.  
Dhanvantri Nagar, Puducherry  
605006



## Cryptanalysis - Frequency Analysis

So far, in this section, we have only talked about encryption techniques. However, cryptanalysis is an equally interesting piece in this puzzle of the evolution of ciphers. Cryptanalysis demonstrates a certain degree of development in the disciplines of statistics, mathematics and linguistics, to name a few. Frequency analysis is one of the first methods of cryptanalysis ever invented. This method was invented by the Arabs and could be used to crack many of the classic ciphers prevalent at those times.

Every language has a certain character of its own which becomes apparent when we analyse written records of that language of considerable length. Frequency of each letter of the language is studied along with frequency of bigraphs and trigraphs (two or three letters used consecutively). These are compared with frequency analysis of a certain length of available ciphertext and used to predict the substitutions used to encode the plaintext. It must be told at this point that this method is only useful for monoalphabetic substitution cipher structures. The method usually also involves a fair amount of educated guesswork based on the knowledge of the language being used. This failure rate of this method increases with reduction in length of the ciphertext. However, due to confines of space, we will be using an example of short length. I shall be decoding a ciphertext to show you how this method combined with educated guesswork can break down codes.

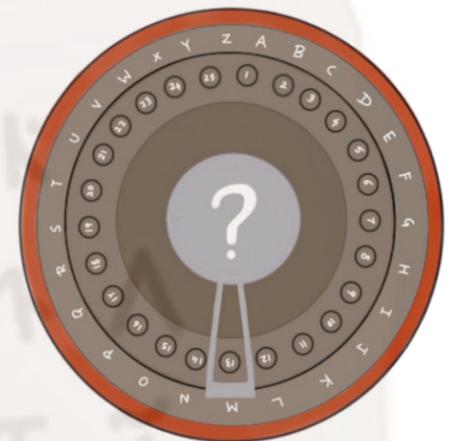
**UH EYWRCFE LMN RXT BDXTFCTFN UF. HXPD EYWRCF JYWW RXT BDXTFCT HXP**

The frequency distribution is as follows:

F	T	X	C	R	W	D	E	H	Y	B	N	P	U	J	L	M
14.5	10.9	10.9	7.3	7.3	7.3	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	1.8	1.8	1.8

The average frequency of 12 most commonly used letters in English language is as follows:

E	T	A	O	I	N	S	H	R	D	L	C
12.7	9.1	8.2	7.5	7.0	6.7	6.3	6.1	6.0	4.3	4.0	2.8



Illustrated by Avisha Bazroy, 2k20

Comparing the frequency analysis of individual letters, we replace F with E and keep T as T. We shall use lowercase letters to denote plaintext.

**UH EYWRCeE LMN Rxt BDXteCteN Ue. HXPD EYWRCe JYWW Rxt BDXteCt HXP**

Now we shall use some guesswork. 'Ue' can only be a handful of words. However, if we consider that the first letter is U as well in a two lettered word, we can guess the most probable substitution for U as M and H as Y (based on frequency distribution of 2 letter words in English language).

**My EYWRCeE LMN Rxt BDXteCteN me. yXPD EYWRCe JYWW Rxt BDXteCt yXP**

Now we are going to substitute a letter for X using input from both frequency data and educated guesswork. 'yXPD' and 'yXP' both are meaningful words. This data shows us that X is most probably a vowel since a consonant won't make sense after y. Since 'yXP' and 'yXPD' are both words, we can guess them to be you and your which substitutes X for O which is supported by frequency distribution proximity and P for U and D for R. We shall revert these changes if they don't work out in the end.

**My EYWRCeE LMN Rot proteCteN me. Your EYWRCe JYWW Rot proteCt you.**

As you can see, decrypting gets easier as more and more letters are substituted. We can already make out the words which seem like protect and protected. We substitute N with D and keep C as C. Since this is a small passage, frequency analysis can't help us anymore. We must rely on our guesswork alone now. Based on that, since the plaintext is supposed to be a meaningful sentence, we substitute R with N as we think 'Rot' maybe not. Similarly, we guess 'LMd' (N substituted by D; vide supra) is 'had' and make appropriate substitutions.

**My EYWenceE had not protected me. Your EYWence JYWW not protect you.**

If we look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> word and 8<sup>th</sup> word, it seems like E is being used to make the word plural and hence we guess E to be S. If that is true, the entire word looks like it may be 'silences' and we make the necessary substitutions. That converts JYWW to 'jill' which we guess to be 'will' if the sentence is to be meaningful.

Hence, we arrive at the plain text "My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you" which is a famous quote by Audre Lorde who is a "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet", addressing homophobia. Her contributions towards the Pride movement shall always be remembered.

I did the decryption without the knowledge of the final plaintext to provide a better glimpse of how frequency analysis can help us in breaking ciphers. Frequency analysis would have helped us much more if the text was significantly larger. However, most of the modern encryption methods are immune to this technique. Certain sophisticated versions of this model has some utility in detecting patterns across blocks in block ciphers in some particular scenarios. Still, this method has a huge significance when it comes to studying evolution of ciphers.

Solve this given Caesar Square (not Shift) Cypher "WVAREENILATNOLUG" to know the name of a well renowned gay cryptanalyst. Email his name and greatest achievement to us at [bonfire@jipmer.net](mailto:bonfire@jipmer.net)

- Souhardya Nandi, 2k19

Correct answer to the clue in the previous issue is TO ERR IS HUMAN. Heerak Ghanesh G, 2k20 was the first to send in the correct answer.

## Word Hunt

S	D	U	T	E	E	C	H	A	N	D	J	Z	T	Y
N	O	F	I	U	L	F	A	T	J	E	N	W	E	U
O	H	I	E	Y	H	E	R	Q	A	N	T	Y	G	O
N	Q	W	R	T	F	G	S	U	J	Y	I	P	A	H
B	S	U	S	L	I	L	Y	B	E	S	W	R	P	F
I	A	D	U	A	L	I	P	A	I	S	A	N	T	L
N	N	A	C	R	R	A	T	B	F	A	L	G	O	V
A	J	N	C	C	I	R	A	E	L	R	N	F	I	T
R	I	L	F	R	E	A	C	T	O	R	E	A	L	I
Y	H	I	U	A	D	B	M	A	L	S	W	W	L	K
D	A	M	C	N	T	T	A	S	T	E	Y	U	E	O
G	P	A	T	U	L	S	Y	D	H	I	O	S	S	R
K	L	T	H	R	B	O	B	S	F	A	R	T	R	E
Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	K	I	O	P	K	T	H	U
P	R	I	D	E	T	U	R	I	N	G	L	O	O	K



Illustration by Baidehi Sikder, 2k20



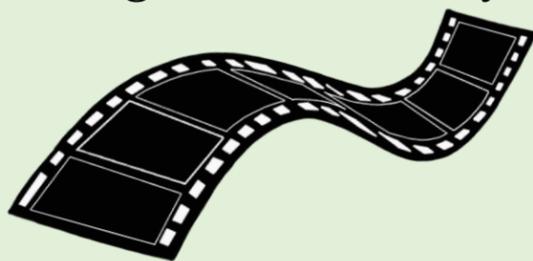
Illustration by Namitha N S, 2k20

1. The gay mathematician who cracked Enigma(6)
2. The gender fluid marvel superhero(4)
3. The only state in India to rule against conversion therapy(9)
4. The Greek sign for gay/lesbian rights(6)
5. The first pride march was held at(7)
6. The first openly gay athlete in India(10)
7. The L in LGBTQIA+ (7)
8. Not male, not female, but(9)
9. Vanya from Umbrella Academy(10)

## Yours Quizzically

### Quiz Question #4:

This movie, originally made in French, released in the year 2013. It is named after a colour. It's based on a homosexual relationship between a teenager and a graduating art student. It's a beautiful story about discovering one's sexuality and finding love.



Please send in your answers to [bonfire@jipmer.net](mailto:bonfire@jipmer.net)! Answers will be published in the next issue.

# A Ripple Through Time

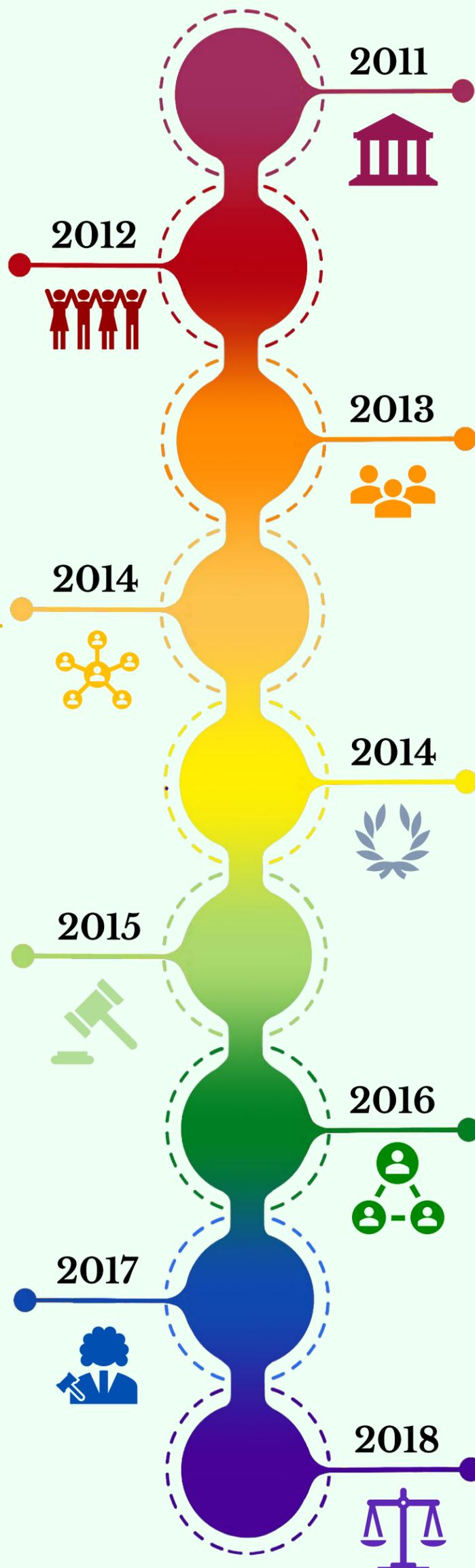
As awareness about the Pride Movement spreads throughout India, let us take a fleeting glance at some striking moments related to LGBTQIA activism in India in the recent years.

Asia's first Genderqueer parade takes place in honour of Alan Turing's centenary at Madurai, continuing the legacy of the 1999 and 2003 Pride Parades in Kolkata.

First Indian LGBT Youth Summit held in Mumbai.

The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill is passed in the Rajya Sabha. Petitions to include intersex people in another bill protecting Trans rights are headlined by Srishti Madurai.

Indian Supreme Court declares privacy an intrinsic right, including Gender Orientation in the concept of privacy.



Srishti Madurai, India's first LGBTQIA+ educational research foundation is launched. They launched the country's first LGBTQIA+ help-line.

First LGBTQIA alliance headed at a high-school at Tagore International, Delhi.

Supreme court rules that transgender people have all the rights of a citizen of India, regardless of their confirmation with the conventional gender appearances.

The queer dating app Amour is launched while the fight against the injustice of section 377 is still on.

Section 377, a controversial part of IPC criminalising gay sex is struck down by the Supreme Court of India.



