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'Gay cure' psychiatrist apologises for flawed study

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A leading psychiatrist whose controversial study backed therapies to make gay people straight has admitted it was flawed and apologised to homosexuals for implying that they could be "cured".

In 2003, Robert Spitzer, while at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, [published a paper](#) in *Archives of Sexual Behavior* concluding that "reparative" therapy – which can include aversive conditioning and spiritual intervention – could change sexual orientation. He reached this conclusion after interviews with 200 self-selected individuals who claimed to have become heterosexual after the therapy.

In [a letter](#) published in the same journal this week, Spitzer speaks of the "fatal flaw" in his study: the impossibility of telling whether his interviewees had genuinely changed sexual orientation.

"I believe I owe the gay community an apology for my study making unproven claims of the efficacy of reparative therapy," he writes.

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