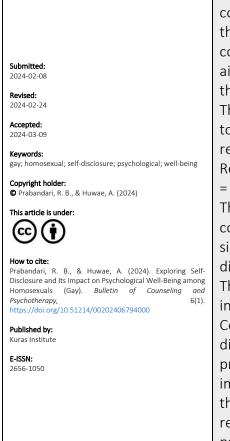
# Exploring Self-Disclosure and Its Impact on Psychological Well-Being among Homosexuals (Gay)

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ABSTRACT: Progress over time has encouraged the gay community to be more open about their sexual identity. However, there is still stigma and societal disacceptance because they are considered deviant from religion, law and culture. This research aims to determine the relationship between self-disclosure and the psychological well-being of homosexuals (gay) in Central Java. The method used is quantitative with a correlational design. A total of 237 homosexuals (gay) in Central Java were used as research participants using incidental sampling techniques. Research measurements used the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale ( $\alpha$ = .92) and the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale ( $\alpha$  = .543-.828). The research data analysis method uses the product-moment correlation test from Karl Pearson. The research results show a significant, but not strong, positive relationship between selfdisclosure and psychological well-being (r = .147 and sig. = .012). This indicates that self-disclosure is one of the factors related to increasing the psychological well-being of homosexuals (gays) in Central Java. The implication of this research is the need for selfdisclosure for homosexuals (Gay) to vent all the feelings and inner pressure they experience and make them feel more relieved to improve their psychological well-being to live their lives well for the sake of past goals. Future research should be able to develop research by looking for other factors related to self-disclosure and psychological well-being.

# INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of increasingly advanced times, world society is increasingly blending into a broad, diverse social order of life. This is also inseparable from the growing phenomenon of lesbian, gay, biseksual and transgender (LGBT), which many people are increasingly discussing. This was triggered by the increasing number of reports regarding the phenomena and activities of LGBT members themselves (Fatgehipon et al., 2019). LGBT in Indonesia at least emerged in the 1960s and continued to develop in the 80s until finally growing rapidly in the 2000s until now (Saputra & Nasvian, 2022). This development is also inseparable from the influence of globalization. With the current globalization, LGBT groups are increasingly willing to voice their existence and obtain their rights as a community (Rosyidah, 2017).

The most rapidly growing LGBT population in Indonesia is homosexual, namely gays and lesbians (Saputra & Nasvian, 2022). The existence of gay people in Indonesia has attracted a lot of controversy because it is considered not in accordance with Indonesian customs and culture. This has an impact on the discriminatory treatment received by gay people from various levels of society, and

they are also made objects of sexual harassment and even violence because they are considered to be contrary to the culture and religion in Indonesia (Fatgehipon et al., 2019). Gays typically report more experiences of discrimination, rejection, stigmatization, and higher levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional dysregulation as a result of their sexual orientation (Frost et al., 2015).

There is currently no accurate data regarding the number of gays in Indonesia. The Indonesian Ministry of Health estimates that in 2009 the gay population in Indonesia was around 800 thousand people, they took refuge behind hundreds of community organizations that support the tendency to have same-sex relationships. In 2012, it rose to around 1 million visible and invisible people. It is predicted that the gay population will continue to increase every year (Syalaby, 2016). In 2017, the Central Java Provincial Health Service (Dinkes) recorded that there were 77,722 gay people in the province (Susanto, 2018).

Responding to data on the gay population in Indonesia, which continues to increase, researchers conducted initial interviews with 10 informants from Central Java on 10-20 January 2023 to look at the phenomenon among members of the homosexual (gay) community. From the data obtained, researchers found information that in Central Java, there is a large gay population, both visible and invisible. They are usually active on social media as gay people. Still, in everyday life, only a few people know the identity of the informants, and no one knows at all because the informants choose not to reveal their identities to people around them. The informants also, on average, are still not 100% able to accept that they are gay. The informants revealed that their relationships with people around them were not very close, and fear of stigma prevented them from revealing themselves.

The increasing number of issues on social media regarding lesbian, gay, biseksual and transgender (LGBT) and people's uncontrolled comments make informants feel afraid and sad even though the comments are not directly directed at them. This has the impact of informants feeling afraid if their identity is revealed to people around them, afraid of being judged and insulted because of their sexual orientation. The informants also felt hampered in socializing, especially with other men, because they felt uncomfortable. On average, informants also want to stop and live an everyday life in general. The informants have low psychological well-being. A person who does not have self-confidence in living his life, has difficulty establishing relationships with other people and does not have a life goal are characteristics of someone with low psychological well-being (Kurniasari et al., 2019).

Psychological well-being can be understood as a condition related to what a person feels about daily activities. It leads to expressing personal feelings regarding what is felt as a result of their experiences (Ryff, 2014). Psychological well-being can be conceptualized as a construct in which there is psychological adjustment and adjustment to negative things (Houben et al., 2015). To achieve optimal psychological well-being, a person must develop positive social relationships as a psychological need, which refers to feelings of connectedness with one another from interactions with fellow humans (Ryff, 2014).

When a person has achieved psychological well-being, it can be described as when a person has clear goals for his life, has independence and regulates his behaviour, can develop himself optimally, can create environmental conditions that suit his psychological condition, can establish positive relationships with other people, and can to accept oneself by holding a positive attitude towards oneself (Ryff, 2014). A homosexual (gay) can also be said to be able to achieve psychological well-being by having the above abilities. People with low psychological well-being tend to ignore their problems, blame themselves for the situation, or take refuge in fantastic thoughts (Freire et al., 2016). On the other hand, when someone has high psychological well-being, it will be beneficial to direct

behaviour to focus on life goals, strive for a better life and develop one's potential (Luo & Hancock, 2020).

Whether psychological well-being is achieved or not is, of course, caused by several factors, namely family relationships, parental care, individual personality, socio-economic environment, education, and gender (Antia et al., 2020; Awaliyah & Arruum Listiyandini, 2018; Francis et al., 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2016). Whether a homosexual (gay) will achieve psychological well-being in himself or not can also be caused by several of these factors. In terms of individual personality factors, a person has many personal and social competencies, including self-disclosure to establish harmonious relationships with others. Therefore, self-disclosure is one factor that helps someone achieve psychological well-being (Ramadhani et al., 2016).

Self-disclosure can be understood as a person's ability to communicate what happens to them to other people (Wheeless, 1976). Self-disclosure involves expressing feelings related to oneself (Dupasquier et al., 2017). Disclosure of information about oneself is not only about less sensitive information, such as tastes or preferences, but also includes more intimate and sensitive information, such as one's feelings, thoughts, hopes and fears (Masur, 2019). Self-disclosure can be described when someone has an awareness of making disclosures, the amount of information disclosed, the positive and negative qualities of the information disclosed, the honesty or accuracy of the disclosure, and the shallowness or intimacy of the information told (Wheeless, 1976).

Low self-disclosure skills will result in a lack of self-confidence and a great fear of judgment from others (Chen, 2017). On the other hand, when someone can have high self-disclosure, it will make it easier for them to communicate, can increase self-confidence, build broader relationships, be able to reduce feelings of guilt, and increase social acceptance, which has an impact on their personality (Gainau, 2019). Self-disclosure can help people to know themselves, improve their ability to overcome problems and reduce the burden of disclosing to others (Zhang, 2017).

Self-disclosure skills influence a gay person's ability to achieve psychological well-being. This is because self-disclosure can provide good mental health. After all, a gay person who expresses himself easily will be more likely to survive positively. This also influences how a person interprets openness and its relationship to psychological well-being (Mantara., 2022). Gays always tend to experience discrimination, which has an impact on their psychological condition, so coming out can be associated with a risk of discrimination and related adverse psychological outcomes (Riggle et al., 2017).

Based on existing phenomena, gay people cannot be separated from negative stigma from society, and this will have an impact on their psychological well-being. As gay people, they also have a fear of revealing their identity to other people, which ultimately has an impact on their psychological well-being. Having self-disclosure skills is an important factor for a gay person to achieve psychological well-being because revealing oneself to others is not easy, especially for gay people whose existence is not accepted by society. Thus, gay people need to have self-disclosure skills to help them improve their psychological well-being. Therefore, researchers are interested in examining the relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being in homosexuals (gays) from Central Java. The reason the researcher chose this title was because he wanted to know directly about the relationship between self-disclosure ability and psychological well-being in homosexual (gay) members in Central Java.

#### Rationale of Study

Research conducted by Soputan (2021) shows that self-disclosure has a positive relationship with the psychological well-being of high school students. Students' self-disclosure during counseling sessions on social media will further improve their psychological well-being. Taniguchi & Thompson (2021) research on students diagnosed with an illness in the United States also revealed that self-

disclosure has a positive relationship with psychological well-being. Self-disclosure regarding health problems is related to well-being. Higher psychology. However, research conducted by Mantara (2022) regarding the role of social support in the relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being in unmarried early adults in the city of Malang stated that there was no significant relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being. There is no relationship if it is mediated by social support.

# Study Aim and Hypotheses

This research aims to determine the relationship between self-disclosure and the psychological well-being of homosexuals (gay) in Central Java. The hypothesis proposed in this research is:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between self-disclosure and psychological wellbeing in the homosexual (gay) community in Central Java.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between self-disclosure and each dimension of psychological well-being in the homosexual (gay) community in Central Java.

# METHODS

# Design

This research uses quantitative research with a correlational design to determine the relationship between self-disclosure (Independent variable) and psychological well-being (dependent variable), especially in homosexuals (gay).

# Participants and Procedure

The population in this study was a homosexual (gay) who came from the city of Central Java. The sampling technique uses an incidental sampling technique, and anyone who happens to match/suit the research criteria will be used as a sample. From distributing the questionnaire, 237 participants met the research criteria. Overall, participant demographics are outlined in Table 1.

The measurements in this study used two psychological scales, namely the self-disclosure scale and psychological well-being. This research was carried out by distributing a link in the form of a Google Form questionnaire to homosexuals (gay) in Central Java, which was shared via social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and Telegram.

Participant Classification	Information	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-20	23	9.7%
	21-25	131	55.3%
	26-30	68	28.7%
	31-35	15	6.3%
Reasons for Being Gay	Sexual harassment	21	8.9%
	Lack of love	64	27%
	Violence in the Family	17	7.2%
	More Comfortable and Interested With	101	42.6%
	Other	34	14.3%
Long Being Gay	<1 Year	4	1.7%
	1-5 Years	98	41.3%
	6-10 Years	111	46.8%
	11-15 Years	16	6.8%
	16-20 Years	5	2.1%
	>20 Years	3	1.3%
Gay Criteria	Тор	64	27%
	Bottom	64	27%
	Vers	109	45.9%

# Table 1. Research Participant Demographics

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#### Instruments

The self-disclosure scale was modified from the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale, which refers to the dimensions of self-disclosure from (Wheeless, 1976): intended disclosure, amount, positive-negativeness, control of depth of disclosure, and honesty-accuracy. The self-disclosure scale was then translated and adjusted by the researcher according to the context of the research participants and validated by expert judgment. The self-disclosure scale consists of 31 items with favourable and unfavourable statements. An example of an item from the self-disclosure scale is "When I reveal myself as gay, this is what happens to me." Responses use a Likert model scale with five choice categories, namely Very Suitable (SS), Suitable (S), Neutral (N), Not Suitable (TS), and Very Unsuitable (STS). Based on the item discrimination power test results, 27 items were obtained that met the coefficient (p>.25), with a total item correlation value ranging between .320-.545 and a value of  $\alpha$  = .884.

The psychological well-being scale is modified (added expert judgment from the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale, which refers to the dimensions of psychological well-being from Ryff (2014), namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with people others (positive relations with others), purpose in life and self-acceptance which were then adapted into Indonesian by Fadhil (2021). The psychological well-being scale was then adjusted by researchers according to the context of the research participants and validated by expert judgment. The psychological well-being scale consists of 28 items with favourable and unfavourable statements. An example of an item from the psychological well-being scale is "I feel satisfied with my current personal qualities." Responses use a Likert model scale with five choice categories, namely Very Suitable (SS), Suitable (S), Neutral (N), Not Suitable (TS), and Very Unsuitable (STS). Based on the item discrimination power test results, 26 items were obtained that met the coefficient (p>.25) with a total item correlation value ranging between .264-.645 and a value of  $\alpha = .903$ .

## Data Analysis

This research hypothesis is tested using Product Moment from Karl Pearson with IBM SPSS Statistics 25 for Windows software. Before testing the theory, an assumption test is carried out, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and the One Way-Anova linearity test.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### Results

## Descriptive Analysis Test

The results of the descriptive statistical data in Table 2 show that the 237 participants in selfdisclosure had a score that moved from a drinking score of 28 to a maximum score of 126 with a standard deviation of 14.557 and an average of 88.55. Then, psychological well-being has a score that moves from a minimum score of 49 to a maximum score of 125 with a standard deviation of 16.014 and an average of 16.014. After obtaining descriptive statistical results, categorization was then carried out on both scales, see table 2.

Table 3, shows that the self-disclosure of homosexuals (gay) in Central Java is in the medium category with a percentage of 47.7% with a total of 113 people. Then, the psychological well-being

	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Μ	SD
Self-Disclosure	237	28	126	88.55	14.557
Psychological Wellbeing	237	49	125	88.36	16.014

#### Table 2. Statistik Deskriptif

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	Interval	Kategori	Mean	SD	Frekuensi	Persentage
Self-Disclosure	113.4 ≤ x ≤ 135	Very high			6	2.5 %
	91.8 ≤ x ≤ 113.4	High			95	40.1 %
	70.2 ≤ x ≤ 91.8	Currently	88.55	14,557	113	47.7 %
	48.6≤ x ≤ 70.2	Low			22	9.28 %
	27 ≤ x ≤ 48.6	Very low			1	0.42 %
Psychological	109.2 ≤ y ≤ 130	Very high			25	10.5 %
Well-being	88.4 ≤ y ≤ 109.2	High			86	36.3 %
	67.6 ≤ y ≤ 88.4	Currently	88.36	16,014	102	43 %
	46.8 ≤ y ≤ 67.6	Low			24	10.1 %
	26 ≤ y ≤ 46.8	Very low			0	0 %

Table 3. Categorization of	Self-Disclosure Scales and	Psychological Well-Being

of a homosexual (gay) in Central Java is in the medium category with a percentage of 43% with a total of 102 people.

## Test Assumptions

Based on the results of the normality test, the K-S-Z value of the self-disclosure variable was .718 with sig. = .682 (p>.05), and the K-S-Z value of the psychological well-being variable is .723 with sig. = .673 (p>.05), which indicates that the two variables in this study are normally distributed. Then, the Fcount linearity test results were obtained at 1307.593 with a sig value. = .020 (p<.05), which shows that self-disclosure and psychological well-being in homosexuals (gay) are linear.

## Hypothesis testing

From the results of Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation test calculation between selfdisclosure and the psychological well-being of homosexuals (gay) in Table 4, a Pearson correlation value of .147 with a sig value is obtained. = .012 (p<.05). This shows that there is a significant but not too strong positive relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being in Homosexuals (Gay).

Next, a correlation test was carried out between self-disclosure and each dimension of psychological well-being. From the correlation test results between self-disclosure and each dimension of psychological well-being, it was found that self-disclosure also has a significant positive relationship with dimensions of psychological well-being, including environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with other people, life goals, and self-acceptance. However, the results show that self-disclosure has no positive relationship with the autonomy dimension, see tabel 3.

## Discussion

The research results show that the hypothesis of this research is accepted, where there is a significant positive relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being in homosexuals (gay). This is in line with research conducted by Utami & Duryati (2023), which states that self-disclosure and psychological well-being have a positive relationship with each other, where when someone wants to have good well-being and avoid mental burdens, someone must be able to carry out good self-disclosure by communicating things that are within themselves to other people and having an attitude of mutual trust in each other. Open people will have more positive interactions and better psychological well-being (Bejakovich & Flett, 2018; Soleymani et al., 2019). It is also seen in this research that self-disclosure carried out by homosexuals (gays) will have an impact on their level of psychological well-being.

(Ouy)										
	Μ	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Self-Disclosure	88.55	14.557	1							
Psychological Well-being	88.33	16.014	.147*	1						
Autonomy	10.58	2.506	.062	.768**	1					
Environmental Mastery	13.41	2.961	.108	.771**	.555**	1				
Personal Growth	16.65	3.797	.110*	.867**	.549**	.558**	1			
Positive Relationships	10.14	2.347	.123*	.752**	.524**	.509**	.622**	1		
Others										
Purpose of life	13.93	3.346	.122*	.830**	.585*	.595**	.716**	.585**	1	
Accepting yourself	23.66	4.635	.166*	.587**	.622**	.581**	.691**	.535**	.566**	1

Table 4. Correlation Test Between Self-Disclosure and Psychological Well-Being of Homosexual	S
(Gay)	

 $\ensuremath{^*}.$  Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

However, the relationship between self-disclosure and psychological well-being in this study does not appear to be very strong, and this could be because they do not yet have the ability for maximum self-disclosure and they are still in the process of achieving self-disclosure abilities. This can be seen from the research results, which show that self-disclosure among homosexuals (gay) is mainly in the medium category. Someone who can carry out self-disclosure will be less likely to feel stress, and their life will be happier because they can let go of the burdens they have held onto themselves (Modu & Huwae, 2023; Willems et al., 2020). Their self-disclosure skills, which are not yet optimal, also impact their psychological well-being, and it can be seen that most participants are in the medium category, too. Thus, self-disclosure is significantly positively related to psychological well-being in homosexuals (gay), although not too strongly.

The results of research conducted by Bejakovich & Flett (2018) show that when someone shows their sexual identity to many people, it will make them happier and improve their psychological wellbeing. Many participants in this study still have low levels of psychological well-being. This could be because many of them still cannot freely reveal that they are homosexual (gay), which makes them have many fears within themselves. This inability to self-disclose could be due to societal stigma that rejects the existence of LGBT, thus reducing their self-confidence (Adiyati, 2019).

The results of this study show that self-disclosure has a significant positive relationship with the dimension of environmental mastery, where self-disclosure carried out by homosexuals (gay) will be related to how they control their life situations and how they take advantage of existing opportunities to create conditions that can fulfill their needs and life values. Self-disclosure can create harmony and interaction in a person's living environment. This can enable them to create the best conditions (Sadtyadi & Paramita, 2022). Homosexuals (gay) reveal their identity more on social media because they feel that social media is the best place, and they feel they have fellow homosexual (gay) friends who will not judge them. Self-disclosure carried out on social media is not a coping medium to reduce stress or eliminate problems but rather to minimize obstacles that exist in their social environment (Kurniawan & Runtu, 2019; Modu & Huwae, 2023).

Self-disclosure is also significantly positively related to personal growth. The disclosures made by homosexuals (gay) are related to how they utilize their potential to continue to develop in living their lives. Self-disclosure can contribute to personal growth (Levi-Belz, 2016). Expressing true feelings and thoughts to others can provide opportunities for personal growth and develop a healthy personality. This can happen because making ourselves transparent to others will allow individuals to see themselves and discover their true identity (Catona & Greene, 2015; Kusila & Huwae, 2023). Similar to homosexuals (gay) in this study, their self-disclosure can enable them to discover their true identity, and this will enable them to grow and develop in life. Then, self-disclosure also has a significant positive relationship with the dimension of positive relations with other people. Homosexuals (gay) reveal what they experience to other people will be related to how deep the relationship they have. The self-disclosure carried out by a person will be related to the relationship they have, which will be useful in being able to share feelings and information about themselves, which can foster an attitude of mutual trust and create a more intimate relationship Dayakisni & Hudaniah (2015). To improve relationships and positive relationships with other people is by sharing information through self-disclosure (Bolton et al., 2013). This can be one of the factors for a homosexual (gay) to achieve psychological well-being, namely by creating positive relationships with other people through self-disclosure.

Furthermore, it was found that self-disclosure had a significant positive relationship with the dimension of purpose in life. Homosexuals (gay) self-disclose their sexual identity in connection with their condition and have goals in life for the future. When someone has a goal or direction, they express themselves to release the burden on their mind so they can find the meaning of their life. Having a life goal will motivate a person to continue living and always try to solve the problems they experience (Buana, 2023; Kuway & Huwae, 2023). Without a clear life goal, a person will easily get carried away by situations that can cause uncertainty, confusion and emptiness (Bastaman, 2019).

Self-disclosure is also significantly positively related to the dimension of self-acceptance. Homosexuals (gay) will reveal what is inside themselves to other people when they have succeeded in accepting things about themselves related to their sexual orientation. When someone expresses or tells their experiences voluntarily, it shows that they have accepted the good and bad experiences that occurred in their life and will emotionally improve their psychological well-being (Griffiths, 2015).

However, self-disclosure has no significant positive relationship with the autonomy dimension. This means that the self-disclosure carried out by homosexuals (gay) is not related to how they view their lives, whether it is by their personal beliefs or not. The results of research conducted by (Ryan & Ryan, 2019) show that an LGB person will be more likely to reveal and be open about their sexual identity in a context that is considered to support their autonomy. This research shows that self-disclosure is not related to autonomy.

This could be because homosexuals (gay) feel explicitly or implicitly that disclosing their sexual identity will be supported or rejected in a particular context when deciding whether to disclose or not. When others do not support autonomy, a person will have obstacles to self-disclosure (Legate et al., 2017). Therefore, autonomy is a factor that causes the relationship between self-disclosure in homosexuals (gay) not to be strong, and this is because they still do not feel like themselves (autonomy) and those who are still thinking about whether by doing self-disclosure will accept or not, and considering the stigma of Indonesian society which still does not accept the existence of LGBT.

#### Implications

This research implies that if a homosexual (gay) individual wants to come out and carry out selfdisclosure, then things that must be considered are related to the sanctions that will be received from the family, social, religious and legal environments. Suppose homosexual individuals are aware of all of this. In that case, it will direct them to more quickly realize themselves in achieving psychological well-being while still understanding the context of life based on cultural values. On the other hand, the autonomy of homosexual (gay) individuals must be able to be trained continuously because remembering this will have a significant impact on the individual's process of going through difficult times in their environment.

#### Limitations and Further Research

Even though this research was carried out according to procedures, the limitation encountered was the researcher's inability to explore the dynamics of romantic (sexual) relationships, which led Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy | Vol 6, No 1, 2024 | 8 to the illnesses suffered by participants as part of the act of becoming homosexual (gay). This can be used as a comparison to explore the variables studied but was not revealed in this research. Apart from that, researchers also did not explore the status of living with parents or family or living alone so that they could describe the reasons why individuals engage in self-disclosure and how to direct this towards achieving psychological well-being.

From the research that has been carried out, suggestions for further research are expected to be able to develop this research by designing mentoring programs or psychological interventions for homosexuals (gay) related to the world of everyday life so that they do not carry out risky actions. Future research can examine this research by sharpening participant demographic factors and other factors outside of self-disclosure related to psychological well-being, such as locus of control, self-regulation, religiosity or spirituality, self-compassion, peer conformity, and support. Social. Apart from that, exploring homosexual (gay) life can be studied using a qualitative study approach so that describing the dynamics of homosexual (gay) life can provide more comprehensive results.

# CONCLUSION

This research concludes that there is a significant positive relationship, but not too strong, between self-disclosure and the psychological well-being of homosexuals (gay) in Central Java. Self-disclosure also has a positive relationship with environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, life goals, and self-acceptance. However, self-disclosure does not have a positive relationship with the autonomy dimension. This research also provides a positive understanding that homosexuals (gay) will be able to face the problems they experience by carrying out self-disclosure so that they can express what they feel they avoid inner pressure or stress, even though currently their existence is still not accepted by the wider community, both religiously and culturally in Indonesia.

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# AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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