NATIONAL CENTER FOR HIV/AIDS, VIRAL HEPATITIS, STD, AND TB PREVENTION

HIV risk behaviors among Black and Hispanic transgender women in the United States

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BACKGROUND

- HIV prevalence is high among trans women, especially Black and Hispanic trans women. According to 2019 NHBS-Trans data, 62% of Black, 35% of Hispanic, and 17% of white/other race trans women tested positive for HIV.
- Trans women who have sex with cisgender men may engage in HIV transmission risk behaviors (Operario et al., 2011). Few studies have examined differences in HIV associated behaviors among trans women by race/ethnicity.
- We investigated differences in HIV testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake in the last 12 months and sexual behaviors with last sex partner by race/ethnicity among trans women.

METHODS

- **Study Design**: Trans women from 7 U.S. cities (Atlanta, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle) were recruited using respondent-driven sampling (RDS), interviewed, and offered HIV testing.
- **Participants**: Participants who were aged 18 years or older, resided in a participating city, did not previously participate in the survey, spoke English or Spanish, provided informed consent, self-identified as women or transgender women, were assigned male or intersex at birth, and tested negative for HIV were included in the analysis.
- **Statistical Methods**: We used log-linked Poisson regression models, adjusted for RDS design, age, education, and 2019 poverty level, to calculate adjusted prevalence ratios (aPR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI).

RESULTS

- **Sexual behaviors**: Black and Hispanic trans women were more likely than white/other counterparts to have condomless sex at last sex, have a cisgender man as last sex partner, and have concurrent sex partners. Hispanic trans women were also more likely to have condomless sex with last sex partner whose HIV status is positive or unknown than their white/other counterparts.
- **HIV testing and PrEP**: Hispanic trans women were more likely to test for HIV and use PrEP than white/other trans women. No difference was found between Black and white/other trans women.

LIMITATIONS

This analysis is subject to several limitations: 1) data were collected in 7 U.S. cities, so results may not be generalizable to other regions; 2) data were collected through RDS strategy, so it is not a simple random sample; and 3) this is a cross-sectional study and we cannot make any causal inferences.

CONCLUSIONS

Compared to white/other trans women, Black and Hispanic trans women were more likely to have a cisgender man as last sex partner, have condomless sex, and have concurrent sex partners. These behaviors put Black and Hispanic trans women at higher risk for HIV than white/other trans women. HIV prevention programs should take these sexual behaviors into account when tailoring interventions for Black and Hispanic trans women.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Among Black and Hispanic trans women:

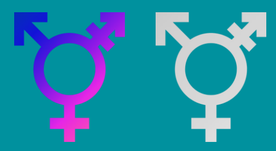
4 in 5 had a cisgender man as last sex partner



1 in 4 had condomless sex at last sex



1 in 2 had concurrent sex partners



Differences in high-risk sexual behaviors between Black and Hispanic trans women in comparison to white/other trans women put them at higher HIV risk.

Figure 1. Percentages of Black, Hispanic, and White/Other transgender women in the analysis sample

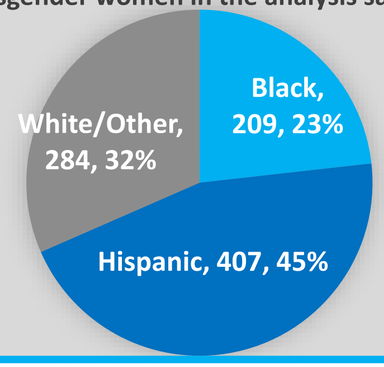


Figure 2. Sexual behaviors among Black, Hispanic, and White/Other transgender women

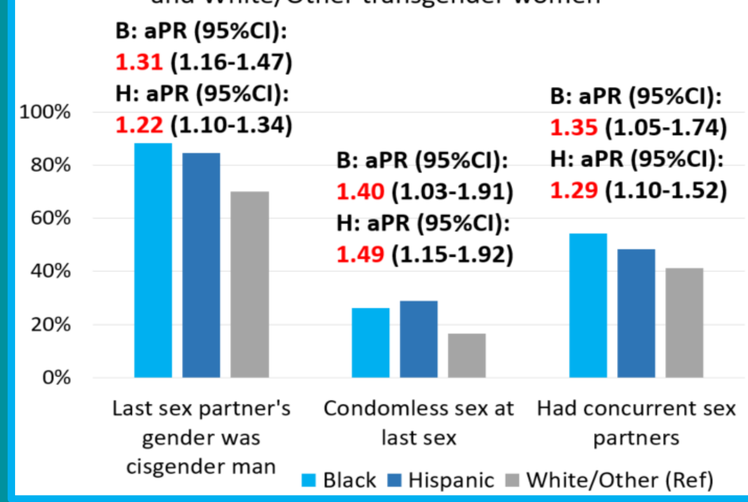
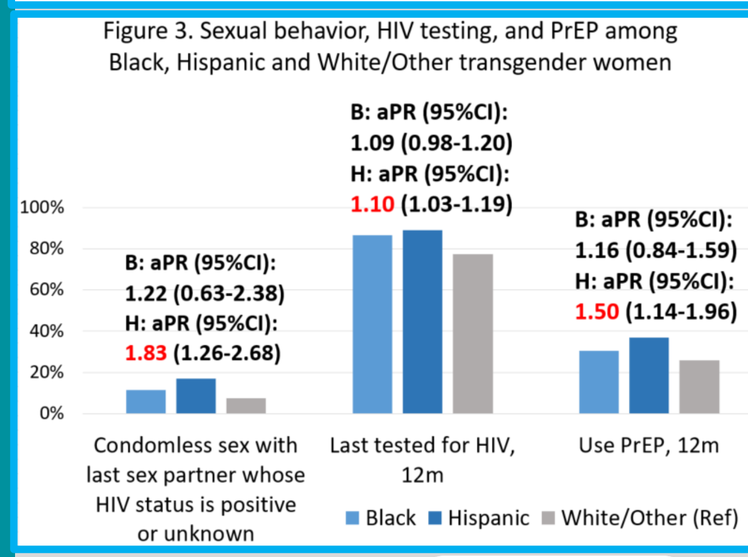


Figure 3. Sexual behavior, HIV testing, and PrEP among Black, Hispanic and White/Other transgender women



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REFERENCE
Operario, D., Nemoto, T., Iwamoto, M., & Moore, T. (2011). Risk for HIV and unprotected sexual behavior in male primary partners of transgender women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9781-x