GENDER IDENTITY, STIGMA, AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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BACKGROUND

- Sexual and gender minority populations are disproportionately affected by the global syndemic of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- We evaluated associations between gender identity and STIs, sexual behaviors, and stigma among people vulnerable to STIs in Nigeria.
- We hypothesized that transgender women (TGW) are more vulnerable to stigma and STIs than cis-gender men who have sex with men (cis-MSM).

METHODS

- From 2013-2020 the TRUST/RV368 cohort enrolled adults assigned the male sex at birth who reported anal sex with men in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria.
- Participants were categorized as cis-MSM, TGW, or non-binary/other based on self-reported gender identity.
- Participants were tested for STIs and completed questionnaires to assess sexual behaviors and social stigma.
- Gender group comparisons were made of HIV, gonorrhea, and chlamydia prevalence and incidence; stigma indicators; and condom use during anal sex.

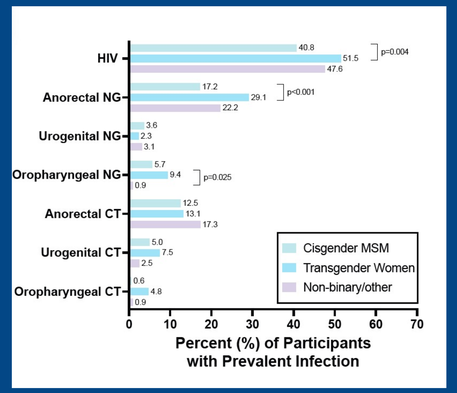
Table 1- Demographics by Gender

Characteristic	Cisgender MSM (N = 2260)	Transgender Women (N=284)	Non-Binary/Other[1] (N=251)	P
Age				0.01
≤21	742 (32.8%)	110 (38.7)	84 (33.5%)	
22-30	1275 (56.4%)	156 (54.9%)	139 (55.4%)	
>30	243 (10.8%)	18 (6.3%	28 (11.2%)	
Site, n (%)				
Abuja	1744 (77.2%)	184 (64.8%)	195 (77.7%)	<0.001
Lagos	516 (22.8%)	100 (35.2%)	56 (22.3%)	
Education Level				0.054
Junior Secondary or Less	300 (13.3%)	38 (13.4%)	21 (8.4%)	
Senior Secondary	1168 (51.7%)	167 (58.8%)	145 (57.8%)	
Higher than Senior Secondary	787 (34.8%)	78 (27.5%)	84 (33.5%)	
Missing/Unknown	5 (0.2%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	
Marital Status				0.15
Single/Never Married	2041 (90.3%)	261 (91.9%)	236 (94.0%)	
Married/Living with a Woman	146 (6.5%)	10 (3.5%)	8 (3.2%)	
Living with a Man	22 (1.0%)	4 (1.4%)	3 (1.2%)	
Divorced/Widowed	51 (2.3%)	9 (3.2%)	4 (1.6%)	
Sexual Orientation				<0.001
Gay/Homosexual	654 (28.9%)	161 (56.7%)	86 (34.3%)	
Bisexual	1599 (70.8%)	121 (42.6%)	162 (64.5%)	
Other/Unknown	7 (0.3%)	2 (0.7%)	3 (1.2%)	

Data are presented as n (%). P-values were calculated using a Pearson's Chi- squared test. Statistically significant p-values (<0.05) are in bold. 1 In the Non-Binary/Other category, responses included: Both Male & Female= 215, Versatile= 18, Refusal= 2, Don't know= 8, Other (unspecified)= 5, Unknown= 3

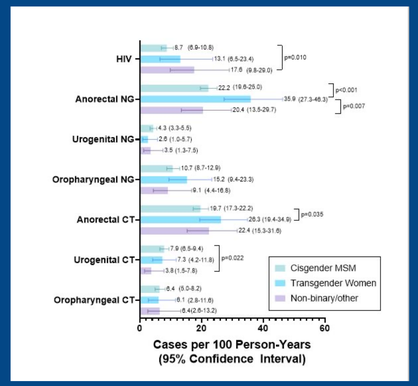
STI burden differs between cis-MSM, transgender women, and non-binary individuals

Figure 1 - STI Prevalence by Gender



STI prevalence amongst study participants stratified by participant gender. Pairwise comparisons between gender groups were performed by a Tukey test and statistically significant p values (≤0.05) are presented.

Figure 2- STI Incidence by Gender

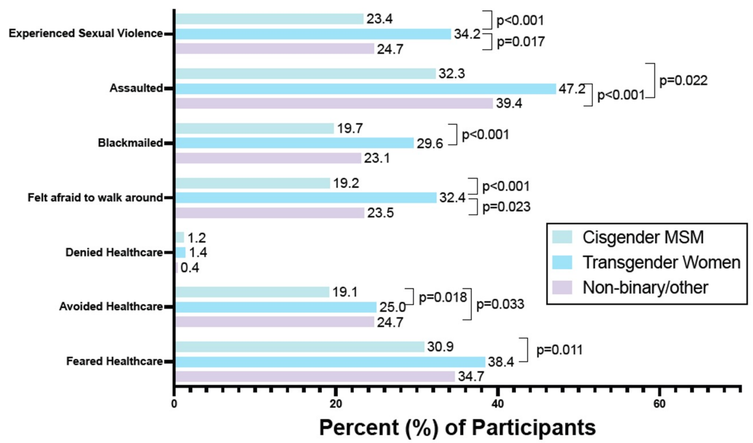


STI incidence amongst study participants stratified by participant gender. Pairwise comparisons of incidence rate ratios between gender groups were performed and statistically significant p values (≤0.05) are presented.

RESULTS

- Among 2795 participants, there were 2260 (80.8%) cis-MSM, 284 (10.2%) TGW, and 251 (9.0%) non-binary/other individuals (Table 1).
- HIV prevalence among cis-MSM, TGW, and non-binary/other participants was 40.8%, 51.5%, and 47.6%, respectively, p=0.001 (Figure 1)
- As compared to cis-MSM, TGW had a higher incidence of HIV and anorectal gonorrhea; HIV incidence was highest among non-binary/other participants (Figure 2)

Figure 3 - Experience of Stigma by Gender



Bars represent the percentage of participants (by gender) who reported each indicator of stigma at the time of enrollment. Pairwise comparisons are made between gender groups for each stigma indicator, with significant p values (0.05) presented.

RESULTS (CONTINUED)

- TGW were more likely than cis-MSM to report being affected by stigma, all p<0.05 (Figure 3)
- Always using condoms during insertive anal sex was reported by 33.4% of cis-MSM, 19.5% of TGW, and 28.7% of non-binary/other participants (p<0.001), and during receptive anal sex by 22.6%, 32.9%, and 22.1%, p<0.001, respectively

CONCLUSIONS

- Sexual and gender minority populations in Nigeria have heterogenous sexual behaviors and experiences of social stigma that may influence vulnerability to HIV and other STIs
- Particularly high HIV incidence, higher stigma, and differential condom use among TGW and non-binary/other participants suggests a need for targeted and gender-affirming prevention interventions.
- Collection of gender identity data in research is necessary to better understand disparities among sexual and gender

ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

The study is being conducted by a consortium made up of the U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP), the Department of Defense Walter Reed Program Nigeria (DOD WRP-N), the University of Maryland School of Medicine, the Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine and the Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria and the Population Council, Nigeria.

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