



## HEALTHCARE ISSUES AMONG TRANSGENDER PEOPLE: A META ANALYTICAL STUDY

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### ABSTRACT:

*Transgender people of our country face many barriers to ensure their survival. The most dangerous issues of the transgender community is health problems, lack of health awareness, risk of HIV/ AIDS and discrimination in the healthcare sector. The objective of the present study is to understand the major health problems of the transgender community through meta analytical method. The researchers analyzed 100 articles published worldwide to understand the magnitude of the health problems among Transgenders. The findings of the study revealed that HIV/AIDS is the most serious health problem of the transgender community. The study calls for an immediate intervention among the transgender community to increase their awareness related to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.*

**KEY WORDS:** Transgender, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

### INTRODUCTION

Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identification of self differs from that usually associated with their biological sex. Many transgender people live most of the part of their life as the members of the opposite sex. Broadly speaking, anyone whose identity, appearance, or behavior falls outside of traditional gender norms can be named as transgender. However, not everyone whose appearance or is atypical will identify as a transgender person.

“Transgender” is the term coined by Oliven (1965). Before which the term transexualism was used to describe the third gender. The word transgender became popular during 1990. The term is commonly used to describe LGBT community. LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.

The epics of different countries have portrayed Transgenders in major roles. For example, Mahabharatha portrayed Shikandi who is born as a girl and fought as a man in Kurukshetra war. Transgender persons had been part of Indian society for centuries. There was historical evidence of recognition of ‘third sex’ or persons not confirm to male or female gender in near the beginning writings of ancient India. The concept of tritiyaprakiti or napumsaka had been integral part of the Hindu mythology , folklore , epic and early Vedic and puranic literatures.

Almost all religion has accounts of transgender people and their existence across the world. Even then the transgenders faces many obstacles for existence and survival. Transgender people often face barriers in accessing culturally competent domestic violence and rape crisis services, certain socio-demographic factors and psychosocial risk are significant predictors of unequal treatment of transgender people in domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers.

According to the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), people who experience intense, persistent gender dysphoria can be diagnosed having Gender Identity Disorder. The criteria is under controversy among various health care practitioners and transgender activists.

Transgender persons are at increased risk for certain types of chronic diseases, cancers and mental health problem. Living with a gender identity which is different from the one assigned to at birth is a traumatic experience which could give rise to serious mental health problems like depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, shame, fear, internalized trans-phobia. Age old discrimination, social stigma, insensitive attitude of peers and family members had increased the mental health problems of the transgender community. The increased rate of mental health had also resulted in increasing the rate of other disease like Heart diseases, obesity etc.

There are high rates of unprotected anal sex among transgender women, which carries a high risk of HIV transmission. Several factors contribute to this. Stigma and discrimination, leading to low self esteem and disempowerment, can make it harder for transgender people insist on condom use. There are other social factors that make transgender people more likely to engage in high-risk sex. Studies have shown that some transgender people who want to affirm their gender identity through sex.

## METHOD

### Research question

What are the major health problems and issues of transgender people?

### Sample and Sampling

The Sample was collected from google scholar, springer, and quora. The researcher decided to analyze 100 articles on the topic HIV and health problems in transgender people. Among the 100 articles, 60 were foreign articles and 40 were Indian articles. The researcher collected articles using random sampling method.

### Data analysis

Meta analytical method was conducted for data analysis. Meta - analysis refers to the analysis of analyses, the statistical analysis of a large collection of analysis from individual studies for the purposes of integrating the findings.

## RESULTS

The meta-analysis of the data was conducted after the thorough review of the articles published in relation to the health problems of transgender people.

**Table 1**

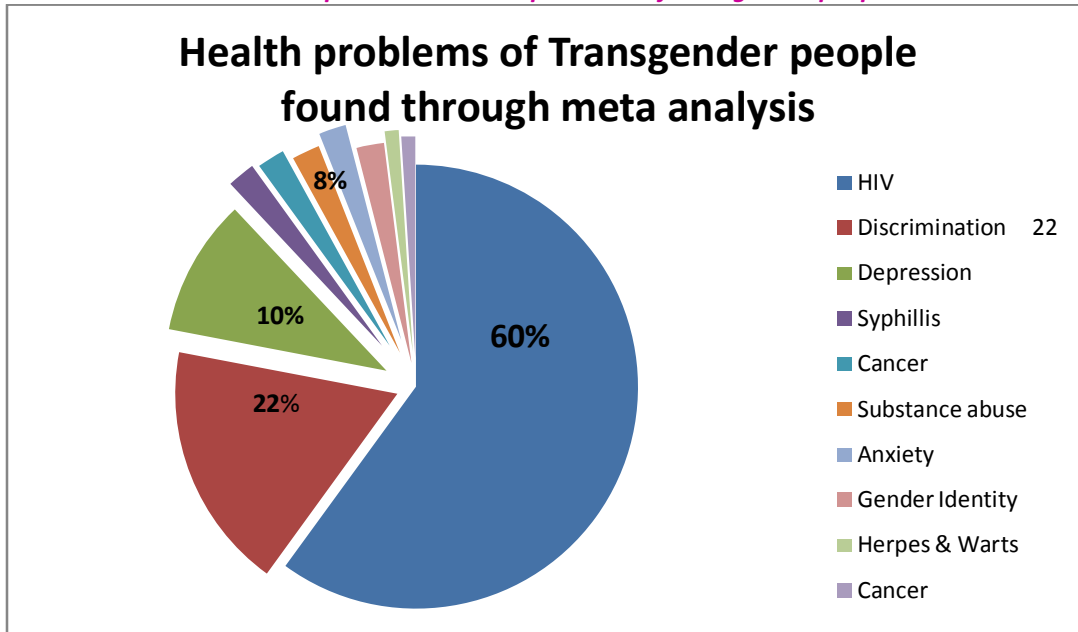
*shows the statistics of the articles published on the basis of healthcare problems of transgender people*

SI No	Health Problems	Number of articles
1	HIV	73
2	Healthcare discrimination	22
3	Syphilis	8
4	Genital ulcers	1
5	Genital wartz	1
6	Herpes	1
7	Cancer	3
8	Depression	14
9	Anxiety	3

10	Gender identity disorder	3
11	Substance use disorders	3

73 articles out of 100 have reported the problem of HIV/AIDS among transgender people. 22 articles reported about the discrimination faced by transgender people in health care sectors. Few articles have mentioned about the mental health problems like depression (14%), anxiety (3%), Gender Identity Disorder (3%) and substance use disorder (3%).

**Figure 1**  
*Shows the prominent health problems of transgender people*



**DISCUSSION**

By analyzing the articles published between the year 1995-2018, it is clear that transgender people experience a lot health problems and difficulties through out their life. Most of the studies were conducted on the time period 2011-2015.

HIV is the major health problem among transgender people (Operario, Soma& Underhill, 2008), (Baral 2011), (Nuttbrock 2013). From the total of 100 articles , about 73 articles discussed about HIV. Generally HIV prevalence among transgender women ( people who are assigned male at birth but identify as being women ) is higher than transgender men ( people who are assigned female at birth but identify as being men).Social, economic and legal exclusion, sex work, high risk sex and injecting hormones puts transgender people at risk of HIV(Baral et.al, 2013)

On 100 articles,22 were discussed about health care discrimination. Discrimination from healthcare providers, a lack of knowledge about transgender needs and the refusal of many national health systems or health insurance providers to cover their care all contribute to situations where it is difficult for transgender people to receive adequate treatment.This can also encourage discrimination within healthcare services, making it hard to access sexual health services(Beattie 2012).

Depression is a common mental health problem among transgender community. Rates of depression are higher in transgender women than in the general population (Guzman-2001, Nuttbrock, 2011, & Hoffman 2013). Lack of social support, violence (physical violence,sexual violence and verbal harassment, physical and sexual abuse, sex work, gender identity are the factors predicting depression in transgender people.

8 articles discussed about syphilis among transgender community. Two factors associated with syphilis infection were HIV infection and condomless anal sex with casual partners. Syphilis infection may potentiate transmission of human immunodeficiency virus ( Marc M Solomon-2014).

Hepatitis is an health problem in transgender community. 4 articles Discussed about hepatitis. The burden of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections in HIV infected transgender individuals is an underestimated issue all over the world. Silicone when injected outside of a health care setting, may be contaminated, and is often injected using shared needles, which can transmit Hepatitis A, B and C (Luzzati, Zatta, Pavan, Serafin, Maurel, Trombetta, &Barbone, 2016).

Gender identity disorder is a mental health problem in transgender people. Among 100 articles , 3 were discussed about GID. Anxiety is an another mental health problem among transgender peoples. Genders- related abuse, discrimination,lack of social support, HIV status, and violence-related stress, internalized stigma are different factors that contribute to mental health problems. Increased rate of mental health had also resulted in increasing the rate of other diseases like Heart diseases, Obesity etc.

Access to mental health care is very problematic for transgender people. Barriers include: lack of insurance; discrimination-induced poverty; mental health provider insensitivity and hostility; and lack of therapists experienced in working with transgender clients

On 100, 3 articles were discussed about cancer in transgender people. "Cancer risk in the transgender community" provides a timely and important insight into a patient population that has long been neglected. Prostate cancer in transgender women deserves special emphasis. In all reported cases of prostate cancer in transgender women, the patient started hormone therapy aged 45 years or older, and one developed metastatic disease 31 years after starting hormone ablation(Turo, Jallad, Prescott, & Cross, 2013).

Three articles discussed about substance use disorder. There is correlation between substance use disorder and other sexually transmitted diseases like HIV. The presence of substance use disorders (SUDs) among transgender people is quite high, with estimates ranging between 25% and 28% of the transgender population (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006). High rates of SUDs in this population have been associated with experiences of stigma, discrimination, bullying, family conflict, and abuse (Burton, Marshal, Chisolm, Sucato, & Friedman, 2013; Lick, Durso, & Johnson, 2013). Unfortunately, the research related to the SUD treatment needs of transgender clients is limited (Keuroghlian, Reisner, White, & Weiss, 2015).

Herpes, genital warts and genital ulcers are other sexually transmitted diseases in transgender community. Being employed in the sex industry is a major risk factor for STI exposure in this population. Comparing with studies on HIV in transgender people, limited studies are available on other sexually transmitted diseases.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data collected through various means, it is understood that the main health issue among transgender people is HIV/AIDS. This is mainly due to their ignorance of protective measures and lack of proper awareness to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Lack of stable income forces many transgender individuals to sex work and prostitution which increases their vulnerability to HIV infection. The need for being admired or recognized, are fulfilled only by sexual activities for them.

Other sexually Transmitted Diseases are also found among transgender community like syphilis, genital warts and ulcers. Proper sex education regarding the prevention of STD's is a need of time among transgender people to protect them from STD's.

The study revealed that the transgender community suffers from discrimination by the health care providers. This is found to be the second major health issue of transgender community. The maltreatment by health care providers makes the transgender community to abstain from health care which may increase their vulnerability to infections.

Depression is a common mental health problem among transgender people. The high rate of depression among them is highly alarming because it can lead to suicidal ideation and other self-harming behaviors. Anxiety is also found common among them due to discrimination, stigma, and rehabilitation issues. A proper psychological intervention is required for transgender people deal with mental health problems.

### SUGGESTION

- Government must ensure the proper delivery of health care to transgender people.
- An awareness program regarding the STD's and preventive measures should be conducted to prevent the sexually transmitted diseases among transgender community.
- Mental health problems are found to be common among transgender community. Psychological intervention is required to deal with this.
- Rehabilitation programs with preference to job security must be implemented for transgender people of the country.

### LIMITATION

- The data were collected from secondary source different results might be yielded if data was collected from primary source.
- Out of many articles published regarding the health issues of transgender people only 100 articles were analyzed to draw inferences.

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