

Sexual behaviour, HIV prevention and testing among transgender and non-binary people who have sex with gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men: Findings from HIV behavioural surveillance in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Background:

Trans and non-binary people (TNB) who have sex with gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) are rarely included in HIV behavioural surveillance. Improved data on risk and protective behaviours among TNB could help identify unmet needs, target health service delivery and focus advocacy efforts. We aimed to describe HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI)-related experiences among TNB participants in a national behavioural surveillance programme in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) for the first time.

Methods:

We analysed data from the 2022 Sex and Prevention of Transmission Study, a repeat cross-sectional HIV behavioural surveillance survey. We categorised TNB participants who reported sex with GBM <5 years into four groups: trans women (TW), trans men (TM), non-binary assigned male at birth (NBAMAB), non-binary assigned female at birth (NBAFAB). We compared demographics, sexual behaviour, prevention practices, testing, and healthcare experiences between each TNB subsample and cis GBM using logistic regression and odds ratios adjusted for age.

Results:

TNB participants were younger, more socioeconomically disadvantaged, and reported more long-term disability than cis GBM. Compared to cis GBM, TM and NBAFAB participants reported fewer male partners and more sex with women and non-binary partners, whereas TW and NBAMAB participants' partnering more closely resembled cis GBM. HIV testing <12 months was consistently lower across all TNB groups, and PrEP <6 months was lower among TM and NBAFAB participants. STI screening and diagnosis <12 months appeared similar across all participants, but few TNB participants reported living with HIV. TNB participants reported higher levels of negative healthcare experiences and lifetime injecting drug use, but not methamphetamine use.

Conclusion:

Each TNB subpopulation had a unique behavioural profile that differed from both other TNB participants and cis GBM. Lower uptake of HIV testing and PrEP could reflect less risk exposure, service barriers, or both.

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