

TRANSGENDER CLIENTS ATTENDING A SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC IN SYDNEY

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Introduction:

Previous studies have highlighted the different sexual lives and risk profiles that trans and gender diverse (TGD) people may have compared to their cisgender peers. Higher rates of sex work, substance use and condomless sex have been reported. However, published research on transgender health remains sparse worldwide, including in Australia. The initial phase of this study aims to describe TGD clients who have recently attended Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC).

Methods:

We undertook a retrospective case review of TGD clients attending SSHC between September 2016 and May 2018. Demographics, risk behaviours and rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were analysed descriptively.

Results:

0.56% of all clients who attended SSHC were TGD (n=117). 86% identified as transgender women, 8% transgender men, 1% non-binary and 5% unspecified. Thailand (65%) and Australia (17%) were the most common countries of birth. Three clients identified as Aboriginal. Most common STIs were rectal chlamydia (26% were diagnosed with this at least once) and pharyngeal gonorrhoea (24%). 5% were HIV positive, including one hepatitis B co-infection and one hepatitis C co-infection. 72% of TGD clients had a history of sex work – 52% currently, 20% previously. Only 64% of current sex workers reported 100% condom use for anal/vaginal sex with clients (n=39/61). Injecting drug use was reported by only 1.7% of TGD patients.

Conclusion:

TGD people attending SSHC were overwhelmingly women, overseas-born and sex workers, which likely reflects the tailored and outreach-driven work with these populations. Notably, services for Thai-speaking sex workers appear to be attracting TGD patients. Condom use rates among current TGD sex workers was lower than previously reported in NSW but drug use was uncommon. The next phase of this study will involve comparative analysis to determine if TGD people are at greater risk than others attending SSHC and further guide service delivery.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to declare.