

RISK OF HIV AND RECENT BACTERIAL SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AMONG TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY INDIVIDUALS IN 20 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: ARE WE OVERLOOKING NON-BINARY PERSONS?

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Background:

Global data show that transgender individuals are disproportionately affected by HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, data is scarce for non-binary individuals due to erasure, exclusion, or misclassification. We assessed the prevalence of HIV and other recent bacterial STIs (syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia) in the preceding six months among transgender and non-binary individuals, and compared their risks of acquiring bacterial STIs.

Methods:

We conducted a cross-sectional survey (PROTECT) in 20 European countries from October 2023 to February 2024. 345 Transgender (n=131) and non-binary participants (n=214) were included in this analysis, using logistic regression for the comparison of the risk of each recent bacterial STI, and multinomial regression for the comparison of the number of recent bacterial STIs among transgender and non-binary individuals, adjusted for their HIV status.

Results:

The median age was 31 years (IQR 26-40). Of the transgender individuals, two (1.5%) were living with HIV, nine (6.9%), 26 (19.8%), and 28 (21.4%) had recent diagnoses of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia, respectively. Of the non-binary individuals, 14 (6.5%) were living with HIV, 40 (18.7%), 66 (30.8), and 53 (24.8%) were diagnosed recently with syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia, respectively. Compared to transgender individuals, non-binary individuals exhibited significantly higher risks of syphilis (aOR=2.71, 1.25-5.87), and elevated, though nonsignificant, risks of gonorrhea (aOR=1.62, 0.95-2.75) and chlamydia (aOR=1.11, 0.65-1.88). Non-binary individuals also demonstrated a significantly higher risk of having at least one bacterial STI (aOR=1.97, 1.12-3.44) and exhibited increased, though nonsignificant, risks of multiple bacterial STIs.

Conclusion:

Both transgender and non-binary individuals face elevated risks of HIV and bacterial STIs in Europe. However, non-binary individuals face an even greater risk, particularly concerning syphilis. Efforts aimed at HIV/STI prevention and surveillance should increase inclusivity for non-binary and other gender-diverse individuals alongside transgender individuals to enhance the provision of tailored HIV/STI prevention and treatment services.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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