

THE SEXUAL HEALTH OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA: RESULTS FROM A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Denton Callander^{1*}, Allison Carter¹, Erin Ogilvie¹, Praveena Gunaratnam, Deborah Bateson², Richard de Visser³, Christopher Fisher⁴, Rebecca Guy¹

1. Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, 2. Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, 3. Brighton & Sussex Medical School, University of Sussex, Sussex, 4. Victoria University

Background: Australia's current STI strategy now recognises transgender and gender diverse ('trans') people as a priority population. To inform this new strategic era, this study presents data on sexual health among Australia's first representative sample of trans people.

Methods: The *Australian Study of Health and Relationships* (ASHR) is a nationally representative survey of holistic sexual health conducted once every decade. The third wave, ASHR3, was conducted in 2023-2024 with participants sampled via random digit dialling and an existing probability panel. Census-calibrated survey weights were applied. A descriptive analysis of trans participants was undertaken, with comparisons to cisgender participants via prevalence rate ratios (PRR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI).

Results: Of 12,833 participants, 243 were trans (weighted: 2.1%, 95%CI:1.8-2.5): 59 trans men, 28 trans women, 156 non-binary people. Among sexually active participants, 28.9% of trans people had been tested for STIs 'recently' (12 months prior to participation), which was higher than cisgender people (13.8%; PRR=2.32, 95%CI:1.66-3.23). Among trans participants, STI testing in the past year was reported by 34.4% of non-binary people, 20.0% trans women, and 19.1% trans men; most trans people were tested in general practices (54.5%) and sexual health clinics (28.1%). Overall, 9.2% of trans people reported a previous bacterial STI diagnosis (5.9% among cisgender people; PRR=1.55, 95%CI:0.91-2.65), including chlamydia (7.6%), gonorrhoea (0.3%), and syphilis (1.0%). Good knowledge of STIs was similar among trans and cisgender people (36.5% vs 30.6%; PRR=1.20, 95%CI:0.93-1.52). Among trans people in a regular relationship, 33.1% reported high sexual satisfaction, which was lower than 55.9% among cisgender people (PRR=0.59, 95%CI:0.43-0.81).

Discussion: Trans and gender diverse people in Australia have higher STI testing than their cisgender peers, alongside comparable diagnoses with, and knowledge of, these infections. These representative results establish a baseline for evaluating Australia's efforts to improve the holistic sexual health of trans people nationally.

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