

# Issues Affecting Communities of the Participants of a Large HIV Prevention Survey in Aotearoa New Zealand. A Mixed-Methods Analysis.

## Authors:

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## Background:

HIV organisations require knowledge about community needs to appropriately communicate with their target audiences. This paper presents the first analysis of open-field responses to a question about “issues affecting participants’ communities” in a large survey targeting communities disproportionately affected by HIV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Methods:

In November 2020, we conducted a cross-sectional survey focusing on HIV prevention, recruiting participants through social media and mobile dating apps. Cisgender and transgender gay and bisexual men, as well as trans women and non-binary people assigned male sex at birth and reporting sex with men were included in the analysis. Participants were asked an open-response-format question about issues currently affecting their communities. We used the Framework Method to identify key themes/meta-themes. We used logistic regression to explore associations between meta-themes and key demographic (age, region, sexual and gender identity) and behavioural (engagement with primary HIV prevention) characteristics.

## Results:

Of 1115 survey participants, 428 (38.4%) answered the open-text question. The key meta-themes were: Discrimination (31.8%), Mental Wellbeing (26.9%), Economic Insecurities (19.4%), LGBTQI+ Culture (17.8%), Navigating Sexual Experiences (16.4%), Health/Healthcare (15.7%; this meta-theme included themes surrounding HIV/STIs), Education/Youth Issues (12.6%), COVID-19 (10.7%), Substances (7.2%), Politics (5.8%). Māori participants were less likely to mention Mental Wellbeing (OR=0.42, 95% CI: 0.18-0.98) than European participants. Transgender and non-binary participants were more likely to mention Discrimination (OR=6.31, 95% CI: 2.56-15.5) and Health/Healthcare (OR=3.98, 95% CI: 1.7-9.28) compared to cisgender participants. Participants “engaged” in HIV prevention were more likely to mention LGBTQI+ Culture (OR=2.35, 95% CI: 1.24-4.45) or Mental Wellbeing (OR=1.94, 95% CI: 1.14-3.32), but less likely to report Economic Insecurities (OR=0.48, 95% CI: 0.26-0.9).

## Conclusion:

The participants raised diverse issues affecting their communities and demonstrated a range of attitudes towards them. Discrimination, mental and physical health, and broader LGBTQI+ culture and relationships issues remain “front-and-centre” for our audiences.

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