

# Trans Young People's Experiences of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Health impacts and strategies for change

## Authors:

Robinson K H,<sup>1</sup> Jackson K,<sup>1</sup> Allison A,<sup>1</sup> Davies C,<sup>2,1</sup> for the Speakingout@Work study group

1. School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University, NSW, Australia.
2. Speciality of Child and Adolescent Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, NSW, Australia.

## Background:

Trans young people are vulnerable to sexual harassment in the workplace because of stigma and discrimination. They are often employed casually, and many are unaware of their workplace rights. These factors operate as powerful deterrents to reporting sexual harassment/assault.

## Methods:

This research undertaken in 2023 included:

(i) *A national cross-sectional online survey* for LGBTQ young people aged 14-30. Questions included demographics; sexual harassment experiences; reporting and responses to sexual harassment; knowledge of existing strategies/resources and rights; outcome measures (e.g., health/wellbeing); and distress (Kessler 5) questions. Bivariate logistic regressions examined the association of categorical closed-ended items, and an unpaired t-test was tested for group mean differences in distress.

(ii) *Interviews*: participants were purposively recruited with representation across demographic variables and industry sectors. Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis.

## Results:

1001 young LGBTQ people completed the survey (average age 21.7 years), of whom 57.2% (95%CI 51.1-60.3%) identified as trans (41% non-binary, 13% trans men, and 3% trans women). Twenty-two interviews were conducted with trans young people. 80.2% of trans participants experienced workplace sexual harassment compared to 73.6% of LGBQ cisgender participants (OR=1.45,  $\chi^2[1]=4.72$ ,  $p=.029$ ); and 30.0% of trans participants experienced intrusive comments/questions about their bodies/anatomy, compared to 6.1% of cisgender participants (OR=6.63,  $\chi^2[1]=99.41$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Workplace sexual harassment from mixed-gender group perpetrators was higher amongst trans participants than cisgender participants (18.5% v. 9.1%;  $\chi^2[3]=10.68$ ,  $p=.014$ ). Trans participants reported significantly higher levels of distress (M=15.1, SD=.23) compared to LGBQ cisgender participants (M=13.3, SD=.29;  $t[600]=-5.05$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Young trans men and nonbinary participants became targets of workplace sexual harassment as perpetrators presumed they were women, with this misgendering leading to dysphoria.

## Conclusions:

Trans young people experience greater barriers to workplace safety and inclusion than LGBQ cisgender peers. Strategies to address sexual harassment in the workplace must include the experiences of trans young people.

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