DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRANSGENDER WOMEN AND MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN REFERRED FOR HIV PARTNER SERVICES IN NEW YORK CITY: 2007-2015

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DEFINITIONS

- **Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM)**
  - Sex at Birth=Male AND Current Gender=Male AND
  - Identified by NYC HIV Surveillance as MSM AND/OR Reported Male Sex Partners in their Lifetime
    - Lifetime Number of Partners >0
    - Past 12 Months Number of Partners>0
    - Yes/No

- **Transgender Women (TW)**
  - Sex at Birth=Male
  - Current Gender=Male-to-Female Transgender (MTF) OR Female
“The high vulnerability and specific health needs of transgender people necessitate a distinct and independent status in the global HIV Response.”

-WHO 2014 CONSOLIDATED GUIDELINES ON HIV PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, AND CARE FOR KEY POPULATIONS
BACKGROUND

Public Health Research Often...

- Combines men who have sex with men and transgender women into 1 category
- Doesn’t have a large enough sample size of transgender women
- Neglects to include transgender women at all
1007 Transgender Women Currently Living With HIV/AIDS in New York City as of 12/31/2014
- NYC HIV Surveillance
- Most likely an underestimate

HIV-positive men who have sex with men and transgender women in NYC
- Delayed timely linkage to care and viral suppression among transgender women
  - Despite similar immunological status at diagnosis

Social determinants of health and HIV transmission risk behavior?
OBJECTIVE

To assess differences in sociodemographic characteristics, HIV transmission risk behavior, and clinical status between men who have sex with men and transgender women in New York City
METHODS
HIV FIELD SERVICES UNIT (FSU)

- Established in 2006 to provide assistance with linkage to care and partner services for HIV-positive persons

- Disease intervention specialists interview HIV-diagnosed persons

Diagram:

1. Elicit
2. Notify
3. Test for HIV
4. HIV+
   - Link to HIV Care
5. HIV-
   - Link to PEP/PrEP
POPULATION AND DATA SOURCES

- Population
  - Referred to FSU between January 2007 and December 2015
    - Newly diagnosed with HIV by a NYC provider
    - Did not receive partner services by the NYC Bureau of STD Prevention and Control
  - ≥ 13 years
  - Men who have sex with men or transgender women
    - Mutually exclusive categories

- Data sources
  - FSU case investigation form
  - NYC surveillance registry data
METHODS: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- Bivariate statistics comparing transgender women with men who have sex with men
- Chi-square test of proportion and Fisher’s exact test
- Alpha ≤0.05 and ≤0.10
- Statistical analysis software (SAS) version 9.3
RESULTS
OVERALL: 2007-2015

- Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM)
  - 97.44%
  - N=5926

- Transgender Women (TW)
  - 2.56%
  - N=156

Total=6082
COMPARSED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE...

Young

- MSM ≤30 Years: 52%
- TW ≤30 Years: 72%

Black or Hispanic

- Non-Hispanic White: 21%
- Hispanic: 39%
- Non-Hispanic Black: 34%
- Other: 6%
COMPARED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE...

**Health Insurance at Diagnosis**
- MSM: 32%
- TW: 24%

**History of Homelessness**
- MSM: 11%
- TW: 30%

**≤ High School Education**
- MSM: 21%
- TW: 39%

**History of Incarceration**
- MSM: 8%
- TW: 22%
COMPARED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN ENGAGE IN TRANSACTIONAL SEX MORE OFTEN

- **Lifetime History of Transactional Sex**
  - TW: 29%
  - MSM: 7%

- **12 Months Prior To Diagnosis**
  - TW: 16%
  - MSM: 2%

- **Received Money Or Drugs in Exchange for Sex** (Lifetime)
  - TW: 8%
  - MSM: 4%

- **Received Sex In Exchange For Money Or Drugs** (Lifetime)
  - TW: 21%
  - MSM: 4%
COMPAARED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN REPORT GREATER SUBSTANCE RISK BEHAVIOR

Binge Drinking* In Past 30 Days

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Ever Injected Drugs or Other Substances**

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*5+ Drinks During One Occasion

**May include non-illicit substances
COMPARED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO...

Report Sex With Known HIV-Positive Partner

- MSM: 23%
- TW: 14%

Receive Notification of HIV Exposure or Was Informed of Sex Partner’s HIV Status

- MSM: 8%
- TW: 3%
COMPARED TO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, TRANSGENDER WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO LINK TO CARE*

*0.10 Level of Significance

87%

82%

50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

MSM

TW

*MSM*  
*TW*
DISCUSSION
Compared To Men Who Have Sex With Men, Transgender Women…

- More likely to
  - Be young, poor, and disenfranchised
  - Engage in riskier sex and drug risk behavior

- Less likely to
  - Identify as non-Hispanic White
  - Have received notification of exposure
  - Report sex with a known HIV-positive person
  - Link to HIV-Care

- Several other statistically significant differences were reported
DISCUSSION

- Conflating men who have sex with men and transgender women together
  - Fails to take into account the distinctly different epidemiologic profiles
  - Could alienate those most at risk
  - Implications for HIV service delivery programs
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