



Sexual behavior and health of transgender people who are sexually active with MSM in Japan; an online survey through gay geosocial networking mobile application, LASH study

Tomoko OHTSUKI¹, Yuzuru IKUSHIMA¹, Takeshi MIWA¹, Masazumi YAMAGUCHI², Chizuko IKEGAMI¹, and Masayoshi TARUI^{1,3}
¹PLACE TOKYO, ²Bunan Hospital, ³Keio University



Acknowledgement

The authors acknowledge and thank the people living with HIV who have generously participated in this research. Also, the authors appreciate the participants of the survey and collaborators as a whole for their contribution.

This study was conducted for *Research on Support for People Living with HIV and Drug Users in Regional Communities* by Research on HIV/AIDS from Health, Labour and Welfare Sciences Research Grants (fiscal 2015-17).

Please see <http://www.chiiki-shien.jp/> and <http://lash.online/> for more information.

Description of respondents (n=83)		
	n	%
Age group		
-19	8	9.6%
20-29	31	37.3%
30-39	28	33.7%
40-49	15	18.1%
50-59	1	1.2%
60-	0	0%
Gender identity		
Trans man	23	27.7%
Trans woman	41	49.4%
Other	19	22.9%
Sexual orientation		
Gay	46	55.4%
Bisexual	10	12.0%
Heterosexual	7	8.4%
Prefer not to determine	5	6.0%
Don't know	12	14.5%
Other	3	3.6%
With whom to have sex		
Men only	64	77.1%
Mainly men	10	12.0%
Mainly women	0	0%
Men and women	5	6.0%
No one	4	4.8%

Background

MSM account for 60-70% of people living with HIV in Japan. However, little has been known about those transgender individuals who presumably have relationships with MSM.

The objectives of this study were to better understand their sexual behavior and health issues so that their needs for HIV prevention, care, and support could be filled.

Methods

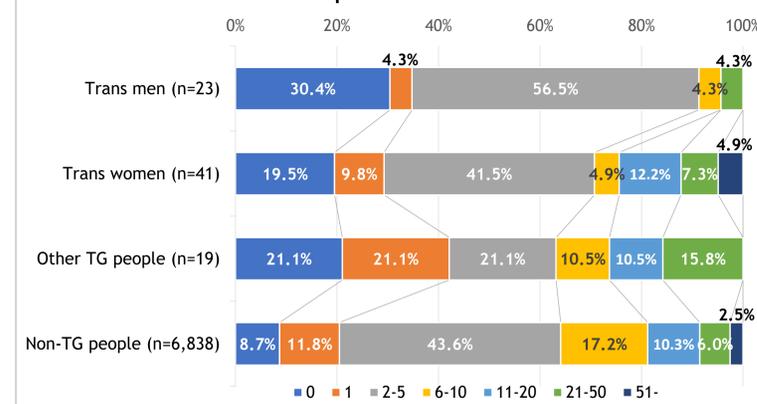
Data come from the LASH (Love life And Sexual Health) study, conducted from September to October 2016, in which the subjects for the study were MSM including transgender people.



The respondents were recruited through the most popular gay geosocial networking mobile application in Japan, 9monsters®. The participants were asked to complete an anonymous, self-administered online survey, composed of 97-item questions about love, sex, and health. We analyzed data for the transgender respondents on their sexual behaviors, HIV testing experience, as well as familiarity and knowledge of HIV.

The study was approved by the research ethics boards at PLACE TOKYO.

Figure 1: Number of men they had sex with in the past six months



Results

Of total 6,921 respondents who completed the survey, 83 respondents identified themselves as transgender (41 trans women, 23 trans men, and 19 others, e.g. gender-x persons) with a mean age of 31.0 years (95%CI 29.1-32.9).

Among trans women, 41.5% had sexual contact with 2 to 5 men and 29.3% with 6 or more men over previous six months; meanwhile, 56.5% had sexual contact with 2 to 5 men and 8.6% with 6 or more men among trans men (figure 1).

No one among trans men but 19.5% in trans women and 36.8% in other transgenders stated they were “very familiar” with HIV (figure 2).

Compared to 62.5% in non-transgender respondents, 56.6% in trans men, 39.0% in trans women, and 57.9% in other transgender persons had tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime (figure 3).

When asked about knowledge of HIV, transgender respondents less understood the effect of ART, social welfare services for HIV, and links between HIV and STIs (figure 4).

Conclusions

The results suggest that, though varies from one person to another, transgender people are sexually active as much as MSM in general. Meanwhile, they seem neither grasp HIV risk nor test for HIV sufficiently.

Since the study results are limited to gay mobile application users, future in-depth research is expected to prepare appropriate HIV strategies for transgender population.

Figure 2: Familiarity of HIV

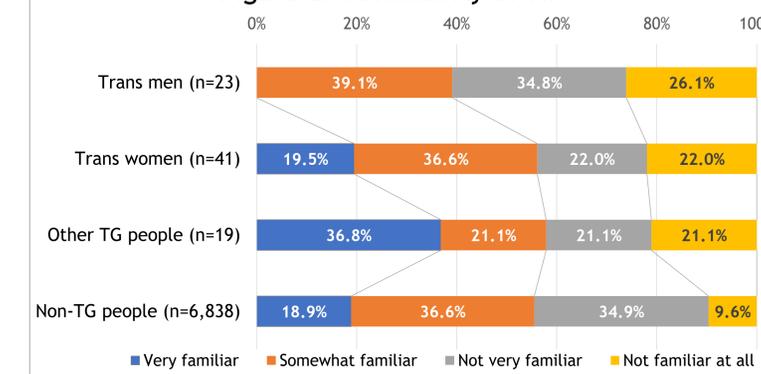


Figure 3: HIV testing experience

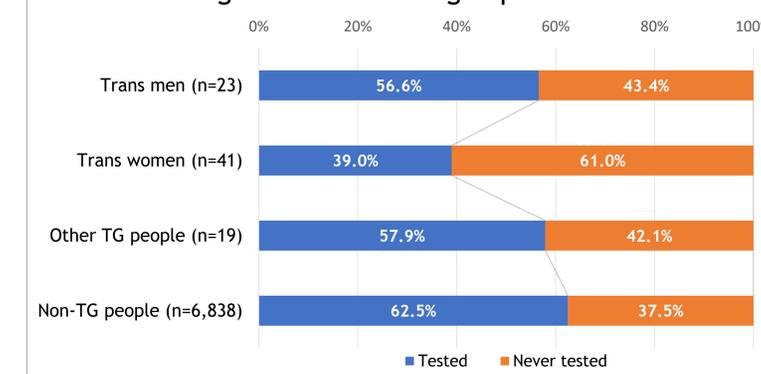
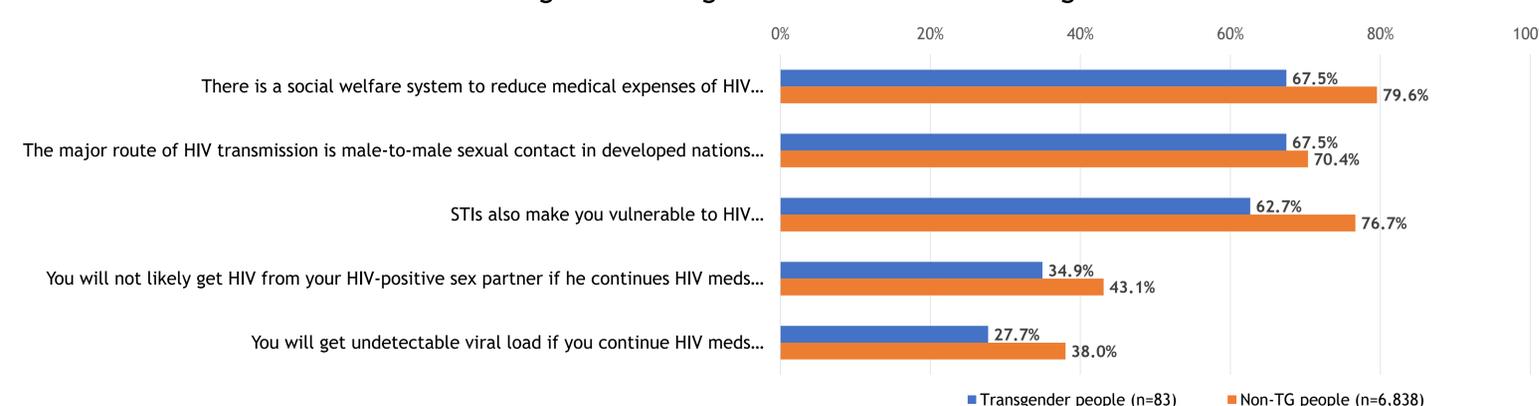


Figure 4: Recognition rate of HIV knowledge



*PLACE TOKYO, a Tokyo-based NGO, provides care and support services for people living with HIV, their partners, and family members. See <http://www.ptokyo.org/> for more information.
 *Should you have any question or comment, please send an e-mail at ohtsuki@ptokyo.org.