

Culturally Relevant HIV Prevention for Transgender Women

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Project Description

Transgender women (people who were assigned 'male' at birth but identify as female) are disproportionately impacted by HIV, especially transgender women of color.

The specific aims of this research are:

1. Conduct 15 qualitative interviews to describe the influence of transgender women's unique cultural context on their HIV-related risk and behaviors and protective factors
2. Create new and adapt existing quantitative measures to more accurately assess psychosocial dimensions and behavior relevant to transgender women's HIV risk and protective factors based on the qualitative data collected for Specific Aim 1
3. Survey 150 transgender women to identify psychosocial influences on HIV-related sexual and injection risk behaviors and protective factors, using the new and adapted quantitative measures created in Specific Aim 2
4. Develop and test the feasibility and acceptability of a theory-driven, culturally grounded HIV prevention intervention for transgender women, based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected in Specific Aims 1 and 3

Significance

Scant HIV-related research focuses on transgender women compared to other high-risk groups, despite evidence of HIV prevalence rates in the range of 22% to 68%. Stigma and discrimination associated with their transgender status prevent transgender women from receiving affirmation and support as women, and they may seek this affirmation in ways that increase risk. However, existing research measures are inadequate for assessment of important correlates of risk with this understudied group. In addition, despite alarmingly high rates of HIV infection, public health intervention research has produced no theory-driven, evidence-based interventions that are culturally relevant to transgender women. The unique cultural context of transgender women creates distinct risk factors that require systematic investigation and then integration into culturally grounded, community-based approaches to intervention. This research is designed to address these important gaps in health disparities science as it pertains to transgender women, especially those of color.

Project Recruitment Dates: August 2009 – December 2012

Project End Date: December 2013