

POLICY BRIEF

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AND HIV

JULY 2015



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Policy brief: Transgender people and HIV

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Abbreviations

ART	antiretroviral therapy
ARV	antiretroviral
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
EMRO	Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
HBV	hepatitis B virus
HTS	HIV testing services
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
IPV	intimate partner violence
NCAVP	National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects
NNRTI	non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor
NSP	needle and syringe programmes
OST	opioid substitution therapy
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PI	protease inhibitors
PrEP	pre-exposure prophylaxis
RTV	ritonavir
SEARO	Regional Office for South-East Asia
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TB	Tuberculosis
TMM	Trans Murder Monitoring Project
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRO	Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Definition of key terms

Definitions used in this document are aligned with current consensus definitions used in relevant WHO guidelines and other United Nations documents.

Hormone therapy (also known as cross-gender hormone therapy or hormone replacement therapy) is a health intervention used by many transgender people. Hormones can be used to feminize or masculinize one's appearance in accord with one's gender identity. People often make assumptions about a person's sex on the basis of physical appearance; hormone therapy can help transgender persons to express themselves and to be recognized as their self-identified gender.

Key populations are defined groups that are at increased risk of HIV irrespective of the epidemic type. Stigma, discrimination and criminalization of their behaviours or identities underlie their greater vulnerability to HIV. The five key populations are men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, people in prisons and other closed settings, sex workers and transgender people.

Natal sex refers to the sex that a person was assigned at birth. This may or may not accord with the individual's own sense of gender identity while growing up. Transgender people, generally speaking, do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Transgender is an umbrella term for all people whose internal sense of their gender (their gender identity) is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people choose different terms to describe themselves. For example, a transgender woman is someone assigned male at birth who identifies as female. She might describe herself as a "transwoman", "MtF", "M2F" or "female". Someone assigned female at birth who identifies as male is a transgender man. He might use the term "transman", "FtM", "F2M" or simply "male" to describe his identity. There are some transgender people who do not identify as either male or female, but rather identify outside of a gender binary. In some cultures specific indigenous terms, such as *hijra* (India), *kathoey* (Thailand), *muxe* (Mexico), *travesti* (Argentina, Brazil) and *waria* (Indonesia) are used, more typically to describe trans women or those who identify as a third sex.

Transition refers to the process that transgender people undergo to express their gender identity. This may involve gender-affirming changes to outward appearance, clothing, mannerisms or to the name someone uses in everyday interactions. These types of changes are sometimes called "social transitions". Transitioning may also involve biotechnological steps that help to align one's anatomy with their gender identity. The changes resulting from these steps are sometimes called "medical transition" or "gender-affirming procedures" and can include feminizing or masculinizing hormone therapy, soft tissue fillers and surgeries.

Transphobia is prejudice directed at transgender people because of their gender identity or expression. It can also affect other people who do not fit societal expectations for males or females. Transphobia can be "institutional", that is, reflected in policies and laws that discriminate against transgender people. It can be "structural", that is, reflected in

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