



LGBT HEALTH

A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO UNDERSTAND HIV/STIS RISK IN TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN LEBANON

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Objective: the aim of this study was to characterize transgender women (TW), a hard-to-reach population, and to understand HIV/STIs risky behavior in a sample in Lebanon.

Methods: Interviews were conducted with 18 Lebanese TW using an STI clinic and checkpoint in Lebanon. Data were analyzed using Qualitative Thematic Analysis.

Results: Three principal themes were raised: social issues; stigma, discrimination/trauma and mental health issues; healthcare access. High risky behavior as condomless sexual intercourses were mentioned due to social and family rejections, difficult to access healthcare services, and stigma with discrimination. However, according to the findings, access to HIV/STIs services was considered better when compared to other health services.

Conclusion: Our findings should help local programs to better understand the TW population in Lebanon and their needs. Special services addressing TW in non-medical and medical issues, taking into consideration an overall comprehensive and multi-disciplinary intervention appears to be the most useful.

