

# **An epidemiological study on knowledge, practice and stigma regarding HIV/AIDS among transgender population in Kolkata, India**

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## **Abstract**

Transgender are those who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their assigned sex. Transgender also include people, whose gender identity is the opposite of their assigned sex (trans men and trans women). They may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, etc., or may consider conventional sexual orientation labels inadequate or inapplicable. In India, commonly identified as hijras and are officially recognized as third gender by the government, being neither completely male nor female and have been given the status of third gender and are protected as per the law despite the social ostracism. They are subject to poverty, feel rejected, or flee their family of origin. Many work as street beggars and sex workers for survival. Their mobile nature, unsafe sexual practice makes them vulnerable to STDs and HIV/AIDS. The purpose of the study was to determine among the transgender, their sexuality and knowledge, attitude and practice towards sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. This is essential for policy making at the national level for the control of HIV/AIDS. 52 transgender persons were purposively selected from a NGO at Kolkata, working with this group and catering to their needs. A questionnaire with relevant questions pertaining to their sexual habits and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STDs was used. A majority of the group (59.6%) belonged to 20-30 years. Males comprised 84.6%, while others identified themselves as third gender. 86.5% were married and the rest (13.5%) were single! 3.5% were sex workers and the rest had other occupation. 13.9% were illiterate and 16.7% studied till high school. 100% had heard about HIV/AIDS and knew about transmission by sexual route but only 75% knew about transmission by sharing of needles and syringes, 50% from mothers during pregnancy and 94.2% by blood transmission. About 40% had past history of STDs.

## **Biography**

Bhaswati Sengupta is Director Professor at All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata, India. The Institute is a premier one, in teaching and training Public Health since 1932 under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. She has been engaged in teaching and training Public Health for more than 25 years. She is mainly a Teacher, training Post-graduate medical and paramedical students, and administrative work of the department and the institute. She has more than 100 publications in national and international journals. Her subject of interest is HIV/AIDS and she had undergone training on HIV/AIDS epidemiology as a Fogarty Scholar in the Department of Epidemiology UCLA, USA under Professor Roger Detels.

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