

# From the 2019 National Survey on Health and Disability: Unmet Healthcare Needs for Gender Diverse Adults with Disabilities

Abby Mulcahy, PhD

Advanced Health Services Research & Development Fellow,  
Portland VA Healthcare System

Delivery System Science Fellow,  
AcademyHealth

Assistant Professor,  
Oregon Health and Science University/Portland State University



@amulcah3



abigail.mulcahy@va.gov

## Acknowledgements

---

Katie Batza, PhD

---

Kelsey Goddard, PhD

---

DJ McMaughan, PhD

---

Noelle Kurth, MPH

---

Carl Streed, MD

---

Anna Marie Wallisch, PhD

---

Jean Hall, PhD

# Gender

- Cisgender vs Transgender
- Gender Diverse

# Disability

- US federal programs use more than 60 different definitions

# The intersection

---

- Multiple compounding and marginalizing forces

# Study aim

---

- Investigate the prevalence of unmet healthcare needs in gender diverse adults living with disabilities.

# Methods

- Data source
  - 2019 National Survey on Health and Disability
- Sample
  - 2175 adults with disabilities
  - 57 gender diverse adults with disabilities who had health insurance

# Results

**Table 1.** Sample characteristics of the National Survey of Health and Disability (NSHD), 2019 (*n* = 2175).

Demographics	%( <i>n</i> ) or Median (IQR)
Age	40 (31, 53)
Gender	
Cisgender	97.01% (2110)
Transgender	2.99% (65)
Race/ethnicity *	
American Indian or Native American	1.15% (25)
Hispanic/Latino	2.99% (65)
Black	4.47% (103)
Asian	2.21% (48)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.18% (4)
White	78.9% (1716)
Prefer not to answer	2.21% (48)
Level of Education	
No formal education	0.09% (2)
Less than high school	1.47% (31)
High school diploma	11.68% (254)
Some college	26.13% (568)
Two-year college	11.82% (257)
Four-year college	26.54% (577)
Graduate/Doctoral	21.43% (465)
Prefer not to answer	0.97% (21)
Income	
Under 138% FPL	37.00% (794)
138–249% FPL	22.55% (484)
250–399% FPL	18.59% (399)
400% FPL and above	21.85% (469)
Main Disability	
Mental illness or psychiatric disability	26.30% (572)
Chronic illness or disease	24.18% (526)
Physical disability	27.08% (589)
Neurological condition	10.80% (235)
Sensory disability	4.28% (93)
Intellectual or cognitive disability	2.90% (63)
Developmental	3.95% (86)
Has insurance	87.91% (1912)
Unmet need with health insurance †	
Unable to see doctor as needed	12.72% (242)
Unable to get prescription medication as needed	17.14% (326)
Unable to see a specialist as needed	12.36% (235)
Unable to get all the dental services needed	29.50% (561)
Unable to get all the preventative services needed	10.62% (202)
Reported one unmet need	44.24% (903)
Reported multiple unmet needs	12.72% (242)

Note. Percentages based on non-missing responses. \* Respondents could select more than one option. Percentages will not sum to 100%. † Percentages based on people with health insurance.



**Table 2.** Comparisons between transgender and cisgender participants on rates of main disability type and unmet needs, NSHD 2019.

Disability	Disability by Gender, % (n)			Prevalence of Disability Type by Gender in Those with at Least One Unmet Need <sup>+</sup> , % (n)		
	Transgender (n = 65)	Cisgender (n = 2110)	Chi2	Transgender (n = 38)	Cisgender (n = 865)	Chi2
Mental illness or psychiatric	27.69% (18)	26.26% (554)	0.796	23.68%(9)	24.39%(211)	0.921
Chronic illness or disease	27.69% (18)	24.08% (508)	0.502	26.32%(10)	26.71%(231)	0.958
Physical	12.31% (8)	27.54% (581) **	0.007	10.53%(4)	27.40%(237) *	0.021
Neurological condition	10.77% (7)	10.81% (228)	0.993	13.16%(5)	11.33%(98)	0.729
Sensory disability	4.62% (3)	4.27% (90)	0.891	7.89%(3)	3.47%(30)	0.155
Intellectual or cognitive	3.08% (2)	2.91% (61)	0.930	2.63%(1)	2.31%(20)	0.898
Developmental	13.85% (9)	3.65% (77) ***	0.000	15.79%(6)	3.93%(34) ***	0.001

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  + Percentages based on people with health insurance.

**Table 3.** Rates and odds of unmet need between transgender people with disabilities ( $n = 57$ ) and cisgender people with disabilities ( $n = 1855$ ) with health insurance, NSHD 2019.

Unmet Need	Rates by Gender, % ( $n$ )		Likelihood of Unmet Need of Transgender Compared to Cisgender People, OR (95% CI)	
	Transgender	Cisgender	Unadjusted	Adjusted <sup>+</sup>
Unable to see doctor as needed	39.29% (22)	11.91% (220) ***	4.79 (2.75–8.33) ***	4.12 (2.29–7.43) ***
Unable to get prescription medication as needed	35.71% (20)	16.58% (306) ***	2.79 (1.60–4.90) ***	3.00 (1.67–5.40) ***
Unable to see a specialist as needed	31.58% (18)	11.7% (217) ***	3.46 (1.95–6.16) **	2.77 (1.50–5.11) **
Unable to get all the dental services needed	47.27% (26)	28.97% (535) **	2.20 (1.28–3.77) **	2.92 (1.63–5.22) ***
Unable to get all the preventative services needed	14.29% (8)	10.51% (194)	1.42 (0.66–3.04)	1.41 (0.65–3.08)
Reported at least one unmet need	66.67%(38)	43.6%(865) **	2.59 (1.48–4.52) **	2.70 (1.52–4.82) **

Note. <sup>+</sup> Adjusted for race, ethnicity, age, income, and education. \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

# Discussion

- Compounding marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion
- Fear and stigma → worse health outcomes

# Limitations

---

- National Survey on Health and Disability
  - Not nationally representative
  - Oversampling of White/Caucasian adults
  - Self-reported information
  - Research questions that can be answered are limited

# Strengths

---

- A vulnerable population
- The body of literature is small
- Informing policies and best practices

# Next steps

- Qualitative work
- New data

