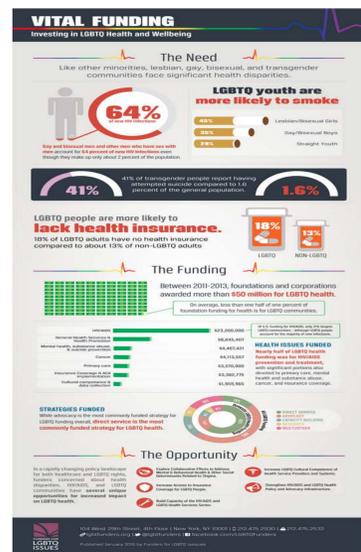
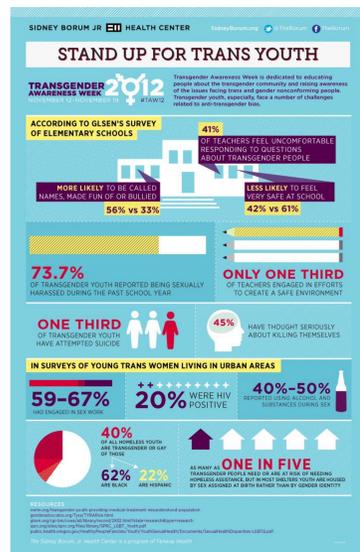


Violence as a predictor of substance use and sex work among sexual minority youth

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Background

- Sexual minorities are those with same-sex attraction or self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ).^{1,2,3}
- Sexual minorities are more likely to experience physical violence, workplace discrimination.
- Sexual minority youth at increased risk of violence, victimization, suicide attempt, depression and anxiety.^{2,3}
- Reducing LGBT health disparities is a Healthy People 2020 goal.
- Sexual minorities, particularly trans women, are more likely to engage in sex work as a means of survival.
- Sex work among sexual minorities has been linked to:
 - Increased risk of HIV and other infectious diseases
 - Higher rates of physical and sexual violence
 - Greater sexual risk-taking
 - Decreased ability to negotiate risk
 - Increased social isolation
- There has been very little research on violence experienced in adolescence linked with engagement in sex work among sexual minority youth, particularly among those biologically male.



Methods

- Data analyzed from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a representative study of young people in the United States from 1994 to 2008.
- Four waves of surveys conducted every 3-5 years.
- Socio-economic information, exposure to violence and biological sex in the first wave survey used to look at subsequent substance use and selling sex for drugs or money in the second wave.
 - This was a preliminary analysis looking only at unweighted data.

Results

Table 1. Frequency of selling sex for drugs or money by demographics, substance use, mental health and exposure to violence information. n=4834 (%)

Sold sex for drugs or money	Age				Biological sex		Race*					Hispanic	
	11-14 y/o	15-16 y/o	17-18 y/o	>18 y/o	Male	Female	African-American	American Indian	Asian/Pacific	White	Other	No	Yes
Never	950 (19.7)	1838 (38)	1605 (33.2)	239 (4.9)	2190 (45.3)	2442 (50.5)	1073 (22.2)	177 (3.7)	188 (3.9)	3155 (65.3)	295 (6.1)	40 (84.2)	547 (113)
Once	20 (0.4)	27 (0.6)	27 (0.6)	6 (0.1)	44 (0.9)	36 (0.7)	31 (0.6)	2 (<0.1)	3 (<0.1)	43 (0.9)	3 (<0.1)	74 (15.5)	4 (<0.1)
More than once	8 (0.2)	17 (0.4)	21 (0.4)	4 (<0.1)	35 (0.7)	15 (0.3)	17 (0.4)	3 (<0.1)	0 (0)	30 (0.6)	2 (<0.1)	44 (9)	6 (0.1)
Refused/Don't Know	10 (0.2)	27 (0.6)	26 (0.6)	9 (0.2)	46 (1)	26 (0.6)	29 (0.6)	2 (<0.1)	1 (<0.1)	35 (0.7)	4 (<0.1)	61 (11.3)	9 (2)

*Not mutually exclusive categories, some participants endorsed multiple racial categories

- Affirmed previous findings that ethnic minorities, males and sexual minorities are more likely to be exposed to violence than whites, females, and heterosexual individuals.
- Minorities, especially American Indians, had the largest portion of exposure to violence.
- Our findings found explicit connections that have not been previously explored.
- As exposure to violence increased, subsequent use of marijuana, cocaine and other drug increased as well.
- High exposure to violence and being a male significantly correlated with engaging in sex work.
- Sexual minority status for males was more strongly associated with sex work than sexual minority status for females.
- Cocaine use and violence had a strong correlation to sex work.
- Findings offer novel insight as to the pathways that lead to sex work that could be used to design community-based interventions to mitigate the impact of violence-related trauma for sexual minority youth, particularly biological males.
- Though same sex attraction was found to be somewhat protective for females, same sex attraction for males was a significant risk factor for biological males, as well as females attracted to males.*
- Since initial analysis, we have attended several workshops on transgender health, including cultural competency, health disparities and intimate partner violence.
- Have had opportunity to disseminate this information to area Community Health Workers, and advocated for greater inclusion in health research and awareness of LGBTQ health disparities.

Implications

- Offers insight as to pathway to sex work, and potential interventions, including:
 - Identifying types of violence experienced by sexual minority youth, such as bullying, trans/homophobic violence
 - Racial, ethnic and socio-economic differences in experiences of violence, substance use and engagement of sex work by sexual minority youth.
 - Substance use interventions specific to sexual minority youth.
 - Interventions to mitigate risks associated with sex work, including:
 - Greater ability to negotiate and reduce risk
 - Greater prophylaxis and condom use
 - More opportunities for employment and efforts to reduce workplace discrimination against sexual minorities
 - Continued analysis of data to show stronger association.

Limitations

- Analysis done using unweighted data only.
- Sexual minority status only encompasses those with same sex attraction.
- Survey did not address gender expression, only biological sex.
 - May exclude those that identify as transgender but are sexually attracted to other sex.
- Motivation or perpetrator of violence is unknown.
- Though the data was taken from surveys at two different times points, causation is not clear.
 - Though does offer insight as to potential causal pathways and points of intervention.
- Attraction by sex, as well as race were not mutually exclusive categories.

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