

Who are Trans People in Ontario?



Trans PULSE E-Bulletin

Volume 1, Issue 1

July 26, 2010

Trans PULSE is a community-based research project investigating the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on the health of trans people in Ontario, Canada. Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, this project is a partnership between researchers, trans community members, and community organizations committed to improving health outcomes for trans people. We hope that health professionals, policy makers, trans communities and allies will use the results of this research to remove barriers, create positive changes, and to improve the health and well-being of trans people.

Background

Our knowledge about who trans people really are is unfortunately still very limited. Many studies have focused on only those who attend certain clinics, or seek out hormone treatment or sex reassignment surgeries.(1,2) More recent studies have tried to capture what trans people “look like” by surveying people in other venues.(3) Trans PULSE has taken a unique snapshot of trans people across Ontario - people with a range of identities, relationships with their bodies, and personal beliefs about the necessity of physical transition. The information we present was collected using a unique research method that would allow us to take the most statistically accurate picture of trans people possible in Ontario.

Our Approach

Surveys were completed by 433 trans people age 16 or over who live, work or receive health care in Ontario, Canada. To increase accessibility, participants completed their surveys either online, via paper copy, or by telephone with a language interpreter. To participate, individuals indicated that they fit under the broad umbrella term of “trans” and were not required to have begun a social or medical gender transition.

Key Findings and their Impact on Policy and Practice

While previous studies conclude that for every person on the female-to-male spectrum, there are three male-to-female individuals, (1,2) our findings suggest that trans people in Ontario are about equally split. In terms of sexual orientation, participants identify across a broad range of sexual orientation identities, which is consistent with other research.(4) Our results also show that while a high percentage of Ontario trans people have post-secondary education, their income levels do not reflect this. The majority are living below the poverty line, and only 7% report personal annual incomes over \$80,000.

	FTM ^a %	MTF ^b %	Total %
Gender spectrum			
Female-to-male	--	--	54
Male-to-female	--	--	47
Age			
16-24	43	25	34
25-34	32	27	29
35-44	14	18	16
45-64	12	24	18
65+	0	6	3
Place of birth			
Canada	79	84	81
Outside of Canada	21	16	19
Region of residence			
Eastern Ontario ^c	13	15	15
Central Ontario	9	26	17
Metropolitan Toronto Area	45	23	32
Western Ontario	27	25	27
Northern Ontario	6	11	9
Education			
< High school	14	11	13
High school diploma	21	12	16
Some college or university	25	31	28
College or university degree	32	40	36
Grad./professional degree	8	6	7
Personal annual income			
<\$15,000	53	47	50
\$15,000 - \$29,999	21	21	21
\$30,000 - \$49,999	20	10	16
\$50,000 - \$79,999	3	12	7
\$80,000 +	3	11	7

a Female-to-male or transmasculine spectrum, includes those identifying as gender queer

b Male-to-female or transfeminine spectrum, includes those identifying as gender queer

c Includes several who live in Quebec, but work or receive healthcare in Ontario

* Please note: These represent statistical estimates that have a margin of error, please use caution when interpreting these numbers

	FTM ^a %	MTF ^b %	Total %
Ethnoracial background^c			
Aboriginal	5	6	6
White Can/Amer/Euro	84	91	86
East/South/Southeast Asian	10	4	7
Black Can/Amer/African	6	0	3
Latin American	4	1	3
Middle Eastern	6	1	4
Other	5	1	4
Sexual orientation^c			
Bisexual or pansexual	22	40	30
Gay	18	2	11
Lesbian	10	20	14
Asexual	4	6	5
Queer	46	14	31
Straight / heterosexual	35	25	30
Two-spirit	3	15	9
Not sure or questioning	12	15	13
Other	7	9	8
Relationship status			
Single, dating	40	51	44
Single, not dating	11	13	12
Monogamous relationship	37	24	32
Open or poly relationship	12	12	12
Parental status			
Parent	17	40	27
Non-parent	83	60	73

a Female-to-male or transmasculine spectrum, includes those identifying as gender queer

b Male-to-female or transfeminine spectrum, includes those identifying as gender queer

c Participants could check multiple responses; will not sum to 100%

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The proportion of trans people born outside of Canada (19%) is significantly lower than it is in the overall Ontario population (28%), and trans people have diverse geographic representation, living across the various regions of the province. FTMs and MTFs reside in each area of the province, however, FTMs are more likely to reside in the Metropolitan Toronto area than the surrounding area, while MTFs are more equally split between Toronto and surrounding areas. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of trans services are located in the "M" postal code (Metropolitan Toronto), 68% of trans Ontarians live outside that postal code area. Other notable differences in comparing MTFs and FTMs are that FTMs are younger, more ethnoracially diverse, and less likely to currently be parents. Approximately 6% of the trans people in our study identify as Aboriginal and 21% indicate a range of ethnoracial identities other than just white Canadian, American or European.

Trans people live in all regions of Ontario and present across a range of ages, sexual orientations, and cultural and ethnoracial identities. These findings significantly build upon the available knowledge about trans people and the range of diversities that exist within trans communities. The diversity represented here highlights the need to take into account this diversity (especially intersecting identities) when shaping policies and programs and identifying issues and gaps in the provision of services. This invites consideration of how these factors may affect experiences of discrimination, overall quality of life, employment, social support, or create particular access barriers in health care, and/or other health issues more broadly.

References

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Contributing Authors:

Greta Bauer, Michelle Boyce,
Todd Coleman, Matthias Kaay,
Kyle Scanlon, Robb Travers

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www.transpulse.ca

For more information:

info@transpulse.ca or 1-877-547-8573

(Canada and U.S.)

+01 (519) 661-2111 ex: 84289

(International)

Trans PULSE is funded by



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