

# How COVID-19 affects transgender health care

## Results from the TransCareCovid-19 study

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*Supported by:*



# Speaker's Disclosure

## Relevant Financial Relationships

- None

## Relevant Nonfinancial Relationships

- None



# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## Supporting Organisations

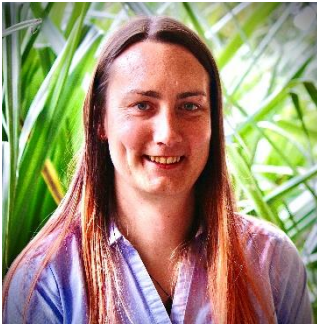


# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Collaborating Researchers*



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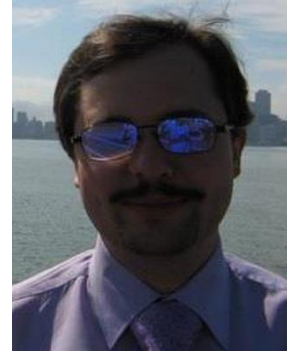
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## Methods

- **Aim:** to measure health care for transgender individuals during the 1<sup>st</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic
- **no funding**
- **ethical approval** from the Local Psychological Ethics Committee at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (LPEK-0130, 01/04/2020), and from Ghent University Hospital (BC-07607, 15/04/2020)
- **Development of a web-based survey & dedicated website**
  - open to anyone who identifies, experiences, and/or describes themselves, as a **transgender\*** person, at least **16 years** of age

### Background info online

#### – Who can take part in this survey?

We recognise the heterogeneity of the trans population, and this survey is open to anyone who identifies, experiences and/or describes themselves as transgender, as long as they are at least 16 years of age. We use the term trans here as an umbrella term that includes many other terms, such as transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, gender-non-conforming, trans men, trans woman, etc. You are able to specify the specific genders you identify with in the survey.

→ visit [www.transcarecovid-19.com](http://www.transcarecovid-19.com)

# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Methods*

- In cooperation with **23 community organisations**
- **Available in 27 languages**  
Arabic, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, English, Farsi, French, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Tajik, Turkish, Ukrainian
- Recruitment via postings on LGBTI-related **social media** channels, mailing lists of **support groups** and LGBTI-related **associations**, and **snowball sampling**
- Data collection **since May 2020** and still **ongoing**  
Data presented here are of **August 9, 2020**

→ visit [www.transcarecovid-19.com](http://www.transcarecovid-19.com)

# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Variables*

**Demographical data** based on Eyssel et al. (2017), Motmans et al. (2017), and Koehler et al. (2018):

Age, education, occupational status, country of residence, place of residence, residence status, living situation, financial income, relationship, minority status (person of colour, religious minority, sexual minority, gender minority, minority due to disability status, another minority), sex assigned at birth, and gender

**Physical and mental health status**

based on Hill et al. (2016), Motmans et al. (2017), and free-text responses

**Behavioural risk factors** (e. g., smoking)

**COVID-19 data**

Symptoms, contact history, knowledge and concerns about COVID-19 (Wang et al., 2020), plus items addressing trans-related discrimination and avoidance of health care (Motmans et al., 2017)

**Influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to transgender health care services**

modified from Eyssel et al., 2017

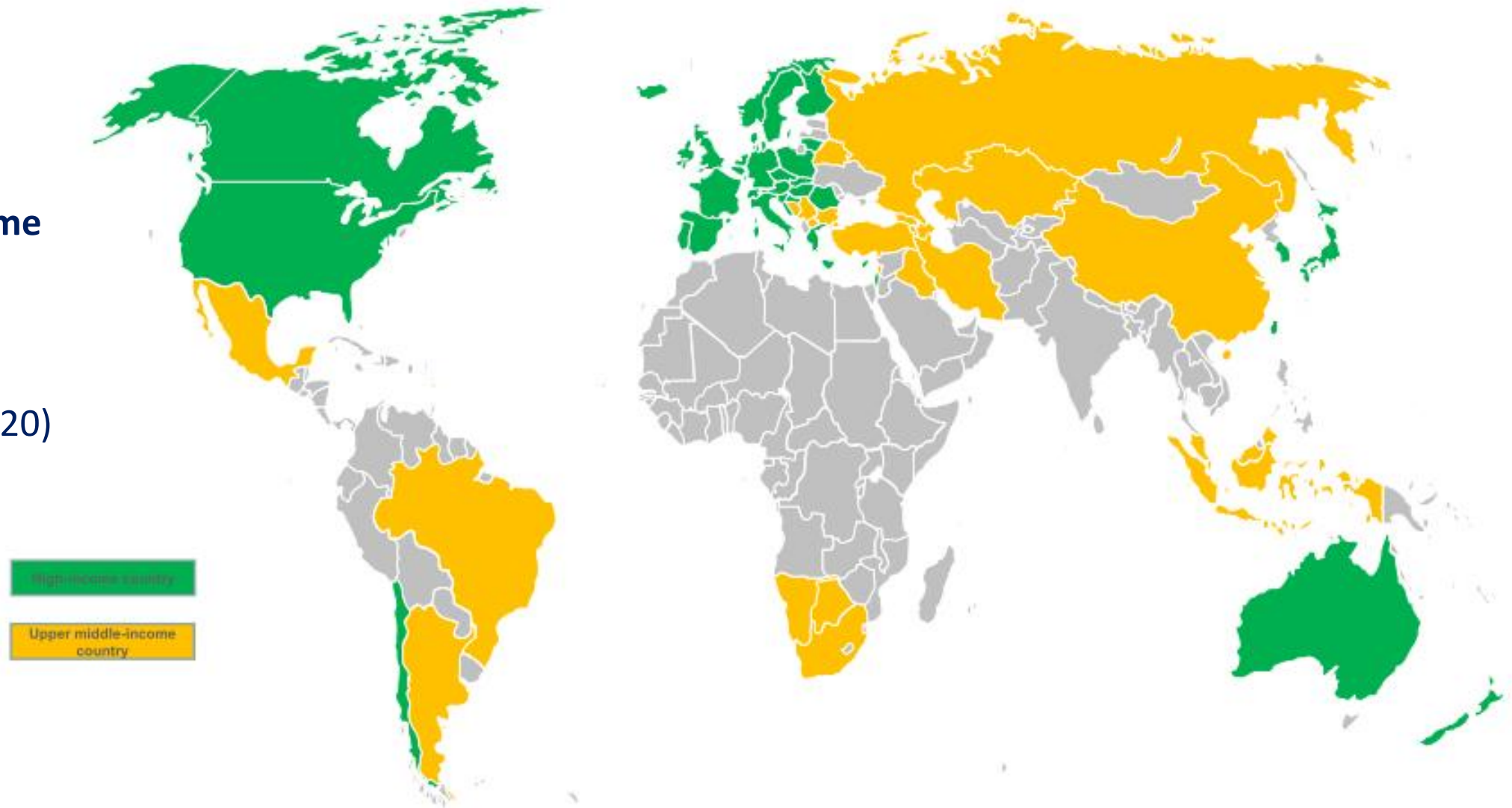
# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Sample size*

Response

**5267 trans people  
from 63 high-income  
and upper-middle  
income countries**

(cited August 9, 2020)





# The TransCareCovid-19 study

*Sample characteristics (N=5267)*

## Gender

(Trans) man	40.6 %
(Trans) woman	33.4 %
Cross-dresser	0.9 %
Non-binary	21.5 %
Don't know, no preference	2.7 %

**Age:** 30.70 (12.06)

**Advanced educational level:** 60.7 %

## Minority status

Person of color	10.5 %
Religious minority	17.3 %
Sexual minority	83.8 %
Minority due to disability status	27.3 %
Another minority	19.3 %

**Economic stress:** 17 % problems to make ends meet

**Partnership:** 48.7 % single

# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Key Results*

**Change of living situation due to COVID-19:** 591 (11.2 %)

**Distress due to current living situation:** 2045 (38.8 %)

### **Mental health:**

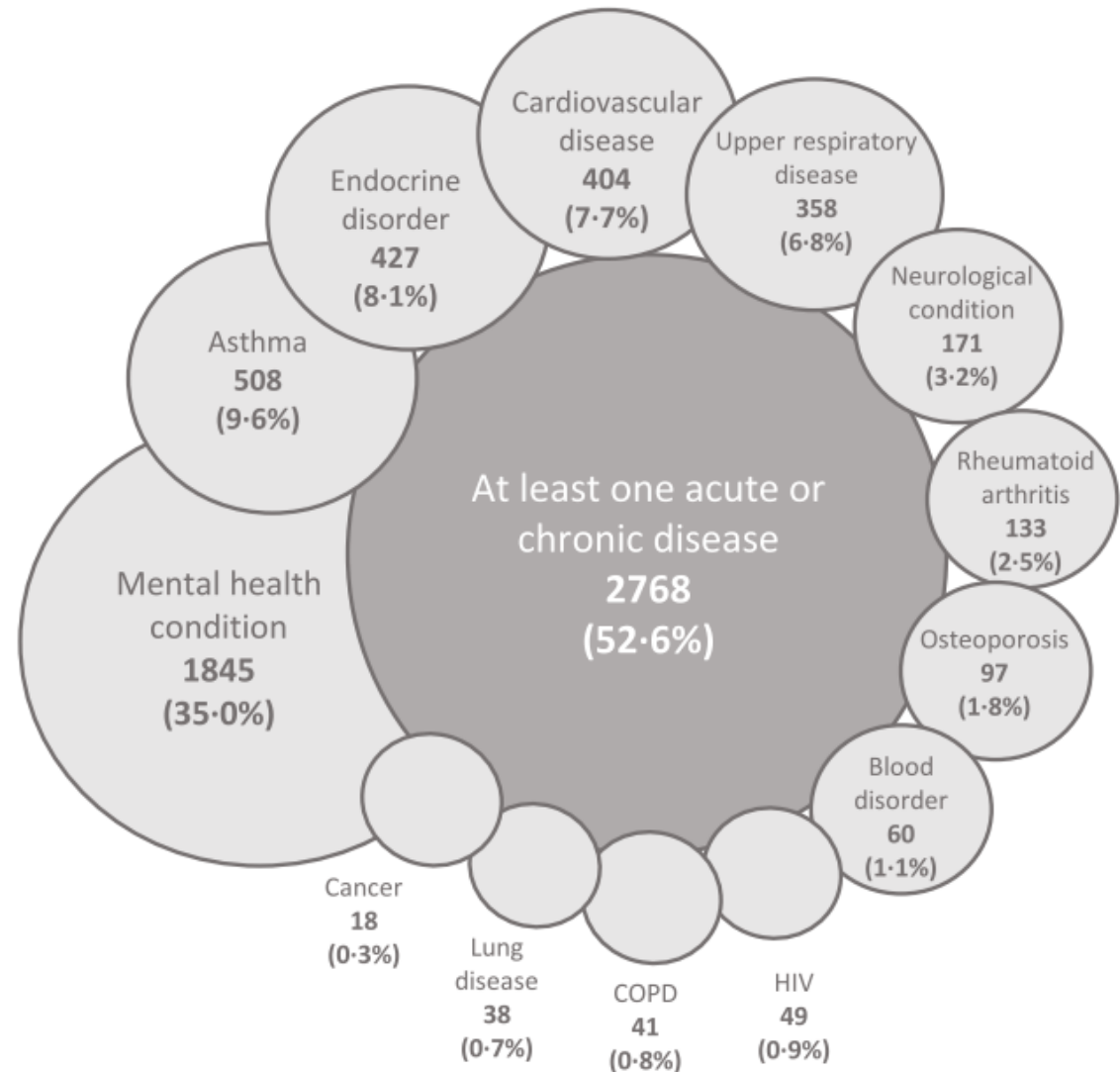
- 1827 (35.1 %) had had **suicidal thoughts** since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic
- 168 (3.2 %) have **attempted suicide** since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic

# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## Key Results

**Over 50 % of the participants had risk factors for a severe course of a COVID-19 infection**

- 20 % higher compared to general population of most OECD countries



# The TransCareCovid-19 study

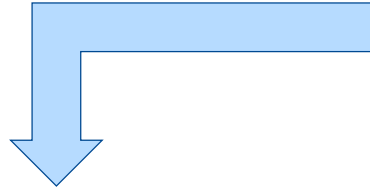
## *Key Results*

**Participants were at a high risk of avoiding testing of a COVID-19 infection due to the fear of mistreatment or discrimination**

<u>Avoided</u> COVID-19 testing because of fear of mistreatment	295 (5.6 %)
<u>Avoided</u> COVID-19 testing because of fear of discrimination	356 (6.8 %)
<u>Will avoid</u> COVID-19 testing because of fear of mistreatment	761 (14.4 %)
<u>Will avoid</u> COVID-19 testing because of fear of discrimination	888 (16.9 %)
<u>Actually</u> experienced mistreatment during Covid-19 testing or care	148 (2.8 %)
<u>Actually</u> experienced discrimination during Covid-19 testing or care	147 (2.8 %)

## Key Results

### Access to transgender health care



Accessed at least one transgender health care procedure	3463 (65.7 %)
Experienced restrictions in access to transgender health care	1706 (49.3 %)

### Access to hormones, surgery or aftercare for recent surgery

Access to hormones currently restricted	676 (21.8 %)
Surgery cancelled or postponed	
Yes	454 (15.6 %)
Not yet, but I expect it will	568 (19.5 %)
Problems with aftercare for recent surgery	344 (56.4 %)

### Access to counselling or support groups

Access to counseling services limited	2285 (43.4 %)
Alternative options for accessing counseling services	1271 (47.9 %)
Member of a support group	1543 (28.5 %)
Access to support groups limited	1067 (69.2 %)



# The TransCareCovid-19 study

## *Key Messages*

**Transgender people might suffer under the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic even more than the general population** due to the **intersections** between their status as

- a vulnerable social group,
- their high amount of medical risk factors,
- and their (possible) need for ongoing trans health care.

The **COVID-19 pandemic can potentiate these vulnerabilities**, add new challenges for transgender individuals, and lead to devastating consequences, like changing housing situation causing stress, restricting access to needed trans care,... which impacts physical or mental health issues, self-harming behaviour, and suicidality.

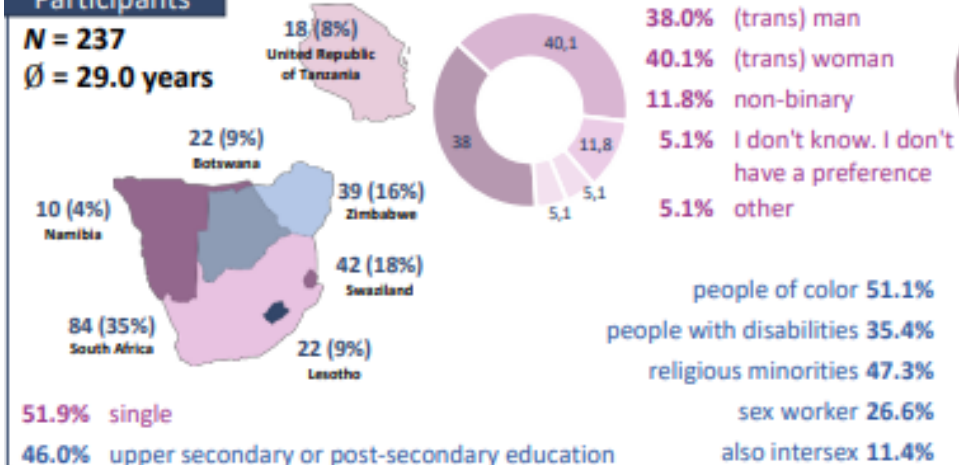
# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TRANSGENDER HEALTH IN AFRICA

RESULTS OF THE TRANSCARECOVID-19 STUDY ([www.transcareCovid-19.com](http://www.transcareCovid-19.com))

## Participants

N = 237

Ø = 29.0 years



## Barriers to healthcare

Restricted access to hormones? YES 8.9%

- 3.0% I can't get an appointment with my hormone prescriber
- 2.1% I can't get a prescription
- 1.7% My hormones cannot be supplied
- 1.7% An appointment was postponed
- 1.3% I'm afraid to go to a medical provider or a hospital
- 1.3% An appointment was cancelled

Access to	restricted?
Medical material that is important after surgery (e.g., vaginal dilators)	15.6%
Binders or packing material	37.6%
Non-medical supplies (e.g., wigs, shaving supplies)	36.7%

## Impact of COVID-19 on transgender health care worldwide

- Over 50% of participants had risk factors for severe course of a COVID-19 infection
  - 20% higher risk compared to general population of most OSCE countries
- Participants were at a high risk of avoiding testing or treatment of a COVID-19 infection due to the fear of mistreatment or discrimination
- Access to transgender health care services was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic for 50% of the participants.

WE THANK ALL PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY!

## Chronic condition

21.1%

34.6% Smoker

12.2% Currently taking medication that suppresses the immune system

23.2% are afraid that COVID-19 will affect their access to hormones in the future

1.3% Expect that an appointment for surgery will be cancelled

2.1% An appointment for surgery was canceled

0.4% Aftercare of a recent surgery is affected

## Health Risks

- 23.2% Back problems
- 15.2% HIV
- 14.3% Upper respiratory disease
- 13.1% Knee problems
- 10.5% Asthma
- 7.6% Cardiovascular disease
- 4.2% Endocrine disorder
- 2.1% Infectious disease
- 1.7% Rheumatoid arthritis
- 1.7% Osteoporosis
- 1.3% COPD
- 0.8% Neurological conditions
- 0.8% Blood disorder

## COVID-19: Experiences and Concerns

- 25.3% would avoid COVID-19 testing because of fear of discrimination, even if they had shown COVID-19 symptoms
- 22.8% had avoided COVID-19 testing or care because of fear of discrimination
- 13.1% had contact with a person who was diagnosed with or is suspected to have COVID-19
- 2.1% were diagnosed with COVID-19





# Thank you!

**Priv.-Doz. Dr. Timo O. Nieder & Andreas Koehler**

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