

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Comprehending Health of Transgender Population in India through Bibliometric Analysis

Review, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Submitted on: 31 Jan 2024

Article DOI: 10.3389/ijph.2024.1606598

### EVALUATION

#### Q 1 Please summarize the main theme of the review.

This paper focuses on a review of available literature on transgender health in India. As transgender communities are among the most disenfranchised communities in India, the paper has potential to highlight areas of focus and key gaps that need to be addressed by the scientific fraternity. Nevertheless, the paper need substantial work prior to be considered for publication. I hope the author(s) find the feedback useful in strengthening their manuscript.

#### Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Strengths:

- This manuscript presents evidence from among most vulnerable communities in India - the transgender communities.
- This is probably among the few available literature reviews of available data on transgender women

Limitations:

- A key limitation is use of only scopus for the literature review. The review has thus missed some papers that were published on other platforms. The author(s) have acknowledged this as a limitation
- The topic says transgender communities but has just one paper for transmasculine communities to my best observation. While transmasculine communities are under-represented in research, the author(s) have not touched upon or addressed this disparity in the paper
- The paper could be strengthened with more nuance (such as highlighting what are the under-researched issues for Indian transgender communities that are better understood at a global level and a stronger understanding of systemic and structural factors that may impact research across regions in India)
- The paper also need to correct language errors in multiple instances through the manuscript (have highlighted some)
- Lastly, the manuscript presents analyses on available literature until 2022. Since it is over a year now, some of the observations may need to be revisited in the context of data that has been published in the last one year

#### Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors, structured in major and minor comments.

Feedback: Comprehending Health of Transgender Population in India through Bibliometric Analysis

Major abstract: The abstract needs more language clarity - there are some incorrect sentence constructions and spelling errors. Please find the instances listed below:

Sentence: Initially, 132 studies were identified, and only 37 articles meeting selection criteria has been presented with the help of PRISMA 2020

Suggestion: Incorrect tense and syntax.

Sentence: This population sub-group is marginalised and suffers from various deprivations affecting their health status. But unfortunately not much has been researched analysing this issue. Hence, this manuscript points to the gaps in research on health of transgender people and suggests potential scope for future research

Suggestion: Multiple spelling errors need to be fixed.

Major feedback on Introduction: The introduction provides a contemporary and historical insight on transgender communities in India. However, the introduction could have better information flow. While the cultural basis of transgender communities is rather prominent in the introduction, there could be greater focus on contemporary issues as well. The authors could touch more on providing insights from the census data (or mention the lack of it), and the contemporary cultural context is incomplete unless it provides an insight on legal developments on transgender rights (Sec 377 being read down, NALSA verdict of 2014 and the subsequent Transgender Act) or touch on the fact that India doesn't have its own medical guidelines for gender reaffirmation (since the authors mention that gender reaffirmation is not free or inexpensive). Another challenge is defining "inexpensive" within the context of transgender communities - government hospitals especially in Mumbai and Delhi do offer some gender reaffirmation processes (hysterectomy, orchidectomy) at highly subsidized costs. National Insurance in the form of AYUSHMAN BHARAT TG PLUS has been announced in 2022 to cover gender reassignment services (but the scheme is largely on paper and has not seen much, if any, uptake). Further, the introduction seems to be focused on transgender women or transfeminine identities but does not delve in transmasculine identities. Lastly, the comparison to Brazilian transgender communities is unclear - it might interest the readers more if the Introduction either focused exclusively on a snapshot of transgender lives in India or provided a more region-wide comparison of transgender identities across cultures.

Major feedback on Methods: The section has some instances of incorrect tenses and word choices. The section should be proofread for language and syntax errors. The eligibility/selection criteria of the articles must be clearly outlined in the manuscript. Author(s) could also clarify their rationale for limiting the search subject areas to only "social sciences" when the focus of this paper is health. Further, it is unclear if search results on databases are affected by capitalization or hyphenation - were the results substantially different when "transgender health India" was searched with and without capitalizing? It would be helpful to indicate the time duration of analyses as it is 2023 and we probably have some additions to the available body of literature on health issues affecting Indian transgender communities.

Major feedback on Results: The author(s) need to fix formatting issues that allow figures/tables and their legends to be placed on the same page. Some of the text and line numbers appear scrambled and need to also be fixed. The language used by the author(s) alternates between a commentary-style approach that conveys well documented facts (such cultural aspects) and reporting findings from papers they've reviewed. This needs to be addressed to offer more clarity to readers as well as bring a more focused outlook the paper.

Minor feedback:

- Line 96-99: While most studies available on transgender communities in India focus on sexual health, one of the two studies mentioned has investigated on stigma and violence outside the context of living with HIV too. The author(s) need to also focus on aspects of mental health and physical wellbeing being discussed within these research papers and does not necessarily indicate lack of attention to other health problems, especially given the context that transgender communities in India are among the most vulnerable and affected by HIV, and continue to have among the highest prevalence even among key populations. But I do agree that holistic focus is important and needed.

- Three-factor analyses: While the information does provide insights into intersections of inter-disciplinary issues impacting transgender health, the content is better placed in a tabular form for more clarity as the multiple names can be confusing to readers who aren't familiar with these authors or their collaborations/other work. I tried to connect the figure that was to be placed alongside the text here, but couldn't as formatting errors have displaced the figures in the lower end of the manuscript and it's difficult to gauge which figure is being referred to in this instance.

- Cultural attributes: It's unclear if this section are results from the author(s) have reviewed or just a commentary on transgender communities in India. These presented points are generally known and

understood and might be better introduced in the introduction section of this manuscript. The connection between cultural attributes and lines 174-177 do not directly seem to have a connection that is supported by this paper's observations.

- Legal considerations: The section is missing information on transgender act (2020), NALSA verdict (2014) as well as allied acts such as mental health care act (2017) and HIV AIDS Act (2017) which outline inclusion of individuals beyond their sex- and gender identity.

Major feedback on Discussion: The section might need work for language clarity. In addition to these, the discussion section could be strengthened with greater nuance around what are the under-researched key areas that should be focused on with regard to transgender health in India (based on a global literature review, perhaps?). While the author(s) make a very valid point on the data being concentrated for some regions, it is vital to acknowledge systemic barriers (TG communities being largely undocumented in India; lack of available funding for non-HIV/STI research for LGBTQ+ research; lack of gender sensitive care for TG communities; and socio-cultural challenges) that may be more pronounced in non-urban India and may impact feasibility of conducting research in such regions. The discussion further does not touch on the invisibility and the lack of representation of transmasculine communities in existing literature.

Minor feedback:

Lines 239-241: "Largest number of transgender communities in India" - needs citation

Lines 240-242: Syntax and singular-plural usage needs to be corrected.

Lines 242-243: The sentence seems incomplete.

Major feedback on Limitations:

The author(s) have acknowledged a key limitation of the study. In addition to these, the author(s) could also consider mentioning that they have missed including publications that may have been published in 2023, especially since their data collection ended in 2022 and we are almost two months into 2024. Lastly, while the author(s) mention transgender communities, the presented analyses only seems to focus mainly on data on transgender women/those with transfeminine identities (there's one paper by Chakrapani et al that focuses on transmasculine communities). This should be acknowledged as a limitation or the author(s) could revise the premise of this paper and indicate that it only presents data on transgender women/transfeminine communities as opposed to all transgender populations as there is insufficient for transmasculine communities.

#### PLEASE COMMENT

**Q 4** Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?

The reference list is adequate but can be strengthened with observations from studies published post 2023 even if they are not a part of the review.

**Q 5** Does this manuscript refer only to published data? (unpublished data is not allowed for Reviews)

Yes.

**Q 6** Does the manuscript cover the issue in an objective and analytical manner

Yes.

**Q 7** Was a review on the issue published in the past 12 months?

No.

**Q 8** Does the review have international or global implications?

The paper has international and global implications.

**Q 9** Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

The title could be edited to reflect that the manuscript mainly focuses on transgender women/communities with transfeminine identities and not all transgender communities.

**Q 10** Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

**Q 11** Is the English language of sufficient quality?

The paper needs to be edited for language, syntax, tense, and spelling errors in multiple instances.

**Q 12** Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

No.

**QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

**Q 13** Quality of generalization and summary



**Q 14** Significance to the field



**Q 15** Interest to a general audience



**Q 16** Quality of the writing



**REVISION LEVEL**

**Q 17** Please take a decision based on your comments:

Major revisions.