

Outcomes of a transgender health program integrated into HIV prevention and care

Michelle DallaPiazza MD, Diana Finkel DO, Rondalya Deshields RN, Khloyei Galloway, Jamila Hughley LCSW, Angel Santana, Sandra Haim RN, Shobha Swaminathan MD
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School Infectious Disease Practice, Newark, New Jersey

Introduction

- Transgender women (TGW) in the United States are 34 times more likely to be living with HIV (LWH) than the general population.¹
- TGW have been reported to have lower retention in care and viral load suppression (VLS) rates.^{2,3}
- Programs that integrate gender-affirming practices to address the complex medical and social needs of patients of the transgender experience may be able to achieve greater success in HIV prevention and treatment outcomes.

Results

- During this time, the number of transgender persons linked to care increased from 7 to 91.
- Sixty-seven (74%) identified as TGW or non-binary feminine. Of those, 42% were living with HIV.
- Of the TGW in the program, those LWH were slightly older (median age 31 vs 27), and had higher rates of a psychiatric diagnosis (70% vs 53%), multiple comorbidities (85% vs 37%), and prior hormone use (90% vs 47%).
- The figure summarizes HIV outcomes. Prior to initiating this program, retention in care was 43% and VLS was 57% (N=7).

Lessons Learned

- We found that outcomes across the HIV prevention and treatment care continuum can be enhanced for TGW by addressing unmet medical and social needs. Our findings highlight the importance of comprehensive gender-affirming care in efforts to engage TGW into HIV prevention and treatment.
- In the setting of renewed efforts to reduce new HIV infections in the US, programs that provide targeted outreach and specialized care for vulnerable populations can help end the HIV epidemic.

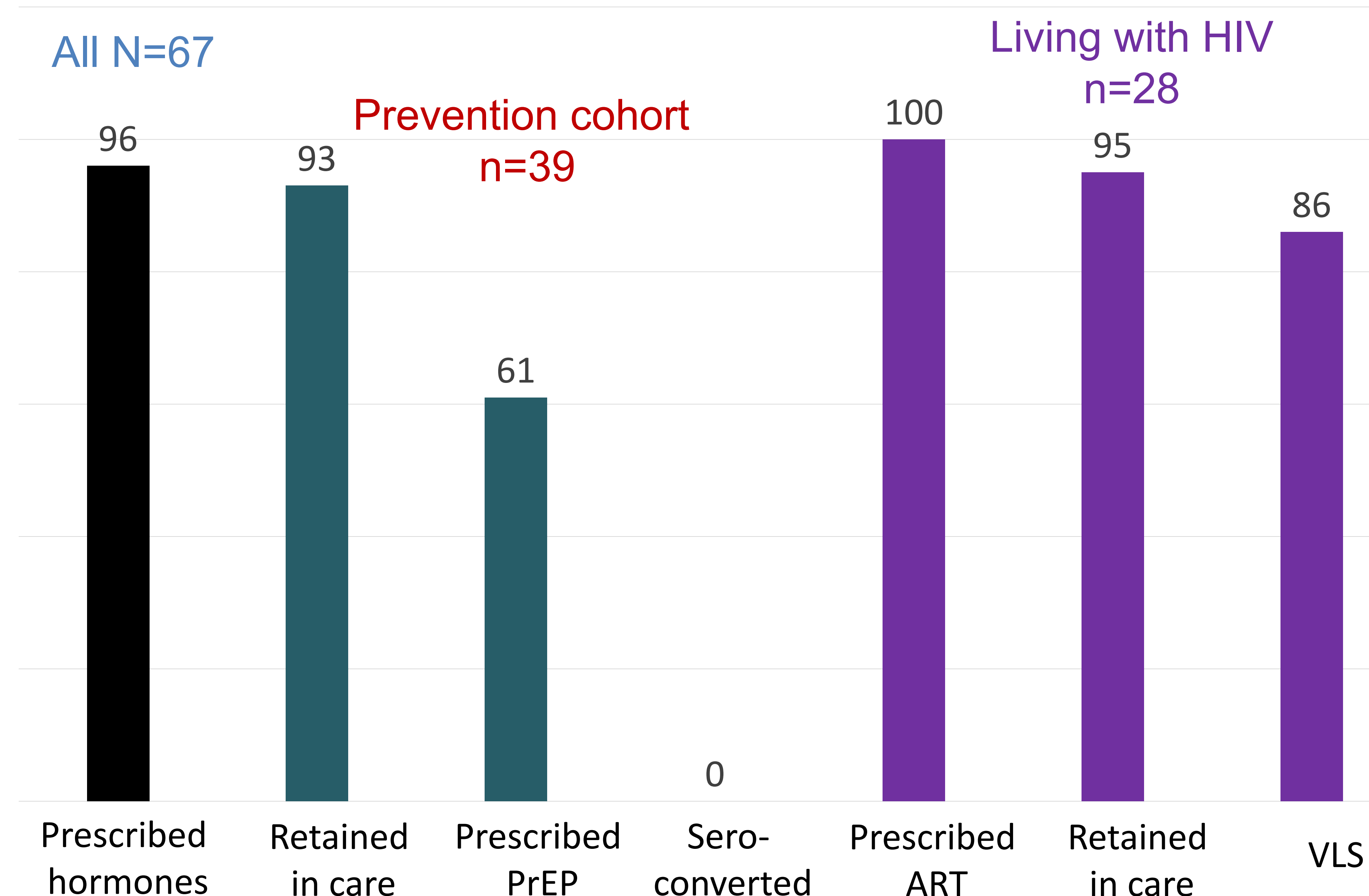
Methods and Activities

- Our academic medical practice provides HIV primary care for over 1600 people LWH, as well as HIV post- and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- In 2017, we created a transgender health program within the practice, implementing community outreach, staff training, hiring of trans-identified staff, mental health support, and gender-affirming hormone treatments.
- From January 2017 to September 2019, we collected data on outcomes for TGW across the HIV treatment and prevention continuum.

Challenges and Limitations

- Our program continues to grow. We hope to engage patients with innovative and welcoming programs that meet the needs of our community.
- Additional community and medical partnerships (e.g. with gender-affirming surgery programs) will be necessary for continued success.
- Even though this is a single center's experience, we hope that our lessons learned will be applicable to other programs seeking to improve outcomes for patients of the transgender and non-binary experience.

Figure: Clinical outcomes for TGW in the gender-affirming program



References

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Contact information:
Michelle DallaPiazza, MD
mld229@njms.rutgers.edu
@MDallaPiazzaMD

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