

Barriers and facilitators to quality healthcare: Raising the voices of transgender patients experiencing lower socioeconomic status and homelessness

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: mental health and primary care clinicians, social workers, health educators

ABSTRACT: Purpose: Transgender (trans) people tend to experience health disparities and forms of discrimination. However, health research focusing on the trans patient population with low socioeconomic status is scarce. This study explored barriers and facilitators to healthcare specific to trans patients experiencing low SES and homelessness.

Methods: Using a semi structured interview approach, trans patients with low SES (n=5) were asked about their experiences at an urban federally qualified health center. Using a qualitative directed content analysis method, interview transcripts were coded to identify barriers and facilitators to accessing healthcare from patient perspectives.

Results: Emerging barriers to care include lack of lifespan primary care and post-operative care, lack of care coordination, confusion regarding Medicaid benefits, referrals to non-affirming healthcare environments, and lack of trans community building. Emerging facilitators include intentional patient panel assignment, a feeling of “moving forward” in transition, and access to health insurance and coverage for transition related care.

Conclusion: These interviews elucidate the unique experiences of homeless and low SES transgender patients and offer insight for systems-level modifications that could improve patient experience of healthcare and care coordination. Recommendations include utilizing a gender-transition care coordination template, and prioritizing clinician education on postoperative, lifespan primary care, and mental health needs.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- List barriers and facilitators to healthcare for transgender patient population.
- Compare barriers and facilitators to healthcare for trans patients in Portland, OR to national barriers and facilitators.
- Discuss strategies to improve healthcare services and experiences for transgender patients.

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