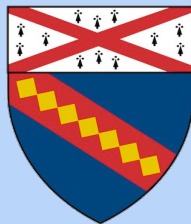


# **Aging Transgender Adults in Massachusetts: Social Stress, Mental Health, and Physical Health Indicators**

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**Massachusetts  
Transgender  
Political  
Coalition**



# Disclosures



**NO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST TO  
DISCLOSE.**

# Aging Transgender Adults

3

- Trans\* → gender identity differs from assigned birth sex
- Exact prevalence is unknown – U.S. estimates vary from 0.1 to 0.5%  
Conron et al. 2012; Gates, (2011)
- Estimates → over one-million transgender people over 50 in U.S.  
Witten, (2003)

WHAT DOES THE \* STAND FOR?

**\*TRANSGENDER**

\*TRANSSEXUAL \*TRANSVESTITE

**\*GENDERQUEER**

\*GENDERFLUID \*NON-BINARY \*GENDERF\*CK

**\*GENDERLESS**

\*AGENDER \*NON-GENDERED

**\*THIRD GENDER**

\*TWO-SPIRIT \*BIGENDER

**\*TRANS MAN**

**\*TRANS WOMAN**

read more at [ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)

# Age-Related Stressors & Health

4

## Aging adults face:

- Onset of chronic health conditions
- Economic constraints
- Decreased mobility
- Reduced or altered social connectivity
- Age related discrimination
  - Cardiovascular responses to stress
  - Risk of mortality
  - Psychological distress
  - Reduced self-care & physical activity
  - Decreased desire to live



(Levy et al., 2000a,b; Pascoe et al., 2009; Yuan, 2007; Sánchez et al., 2009; Scott et al., 2011 )

# Gender-Related Stressors, Aging & Health

5

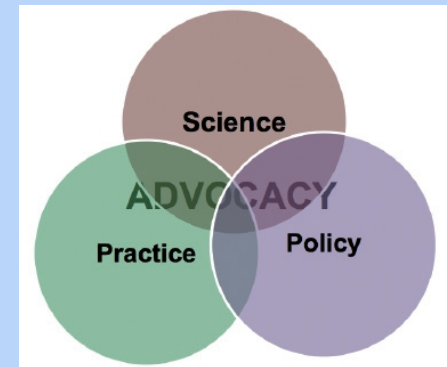
Aging transgender adults may also experience *gender-related stressors*

- Discrimination in everyday settings → Poor mental health
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Healthcare → Barriers to care
- Lack/loss of family or social support



# Research on Age vs. Gender-Related Discrimination

- **Multiple disadvantaged statuses** may be vulnerable to discrimination and poor health (Grollman, 2014)
- **Limited research** on age-related discrimination among aging transgender adults
- Research needed to **inform interventions**:
  - Reduce discrimination
  - Improve the health of aging transgender adults





# Raise your voice for our health

## Share your stories with Project VOICE

Voicing Our Individual and Community Experiences

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition and Fenway Health seeks transgender adult volunteers in Massachusetts to take part in an online survey on stress and health.

### **YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IF YOU:**

- ◀ Are transgender or gender non-conforming
- ◀ Are age 18 years or older
- ◀ Live or have lived in Massachusetts in the past year

The purpose of this needs assessment is to gain a deeper understanding of the health of transgender adult communities in Massachusetts, and to specifically understand the social stressors that influence health and wellbeing across the life course of transgender people.

Participants have the chance to be entered into a raffle with over \$500 in gift cards and prizes, including an iPad.

# Study Purpose

8

[1] Describe the sociodemographic, **discrimination** experiences, **social support** systems, and **mental and physical health** of aging transgender individuals in MA

[2] Explore the distribution of **reasons attributed to everyday** discrimination experiences, including **age & gender**

[3] Evaluate whether **number of discrimination** experiences predict recent **physical and emotional health symptoms**, after adjustment for known protective factors (social support) and potential confounders (age and gender)



# Methods: Analytic Sample



452 in the Voice sample



391 Excluded who were under age 50



61 Transgender adults age 50  
and older



# Measures



- **Age**
- **Race/ethnicity**
- **Assigned sex at birth**
- **Gender identity**
- **Employment**
- **Annual income**
- **Relationship status**
- **Social Support**
- **Physical Health**
- **Mental Health**



# Primary Predictor: Everyday Discrimination



## Everyday discrimination - past 12 months

Responses 0= “never” to 4= “very often”:

- *You have been treated with less courtesy than other people*
- *You have been called names or insulted*
- *You have been threatened or harassed*
- *People have acted as if they are judging you negatively*

## Discrimination Attributions

- *Age*
- *Gender identity*
- *Race*
- *Weight*
- *Income*



(Krieger et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2004; Williams et al., 1997)

# Outcomes: Recent Stress Responses



## **Physical Stress Response** (yes/no)

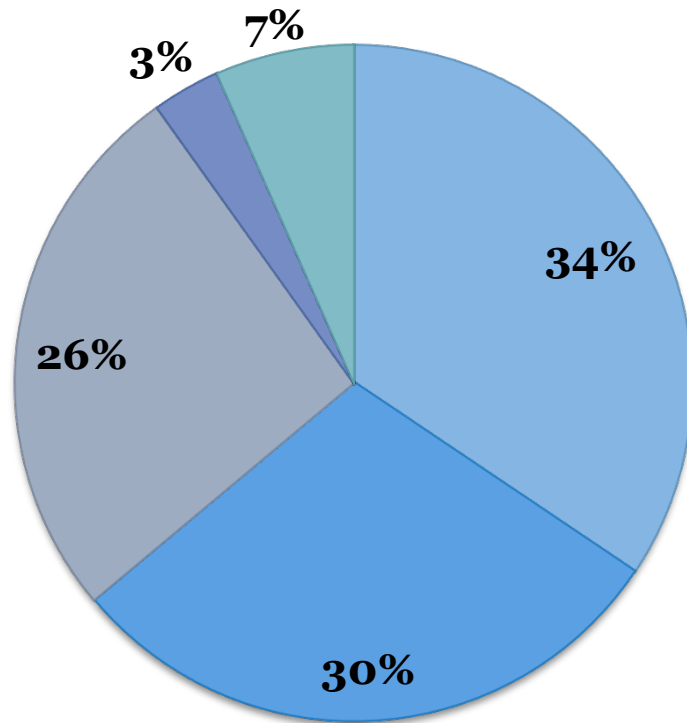
*Experienced physical symptoms (headache, upset stomach, tensing of muscles, or a pounding heart) due to discrimination in past 30 days*

## **Emotional Stress Response** (yes/no)

*Felt emotionally upset (e.g., sad, or frustrated) due to discrimination in the past 30 day*

# Age & Race

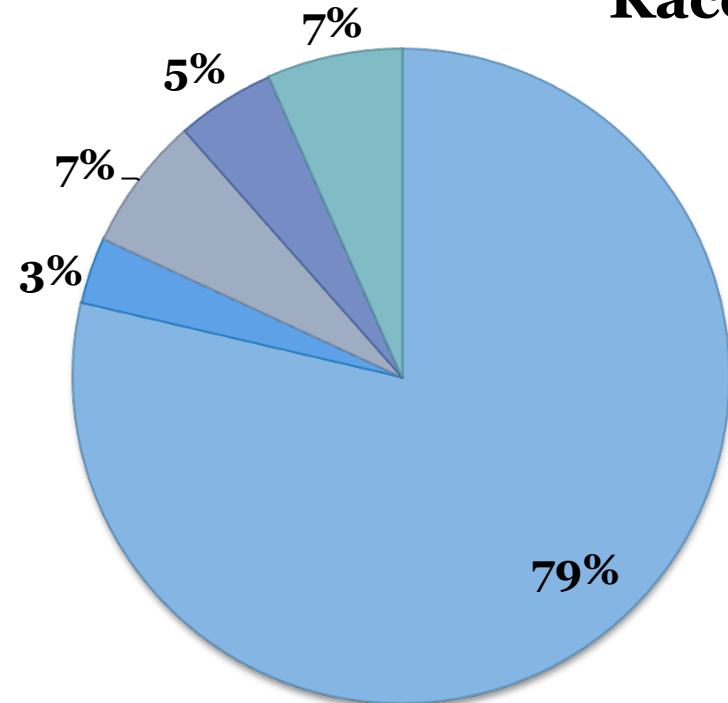
## Age



Mean: 57.7  
SD: 5.8

- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70-75

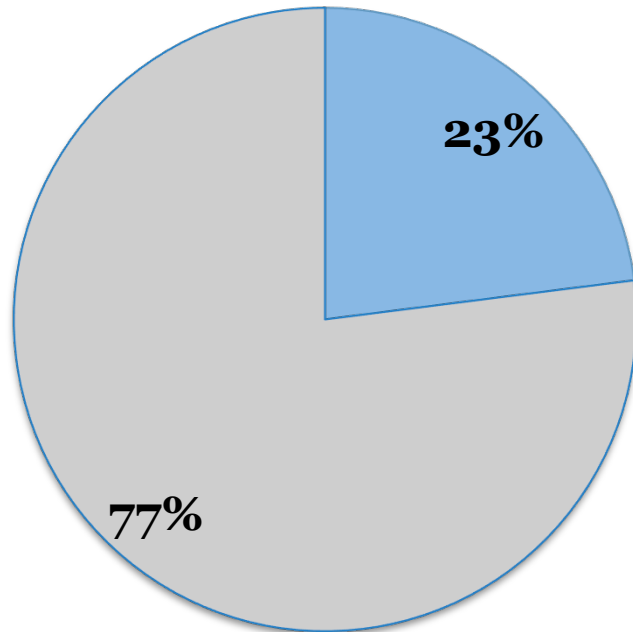
## Race



- White, Not Hispanic
- Black, Not Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Multiracial
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

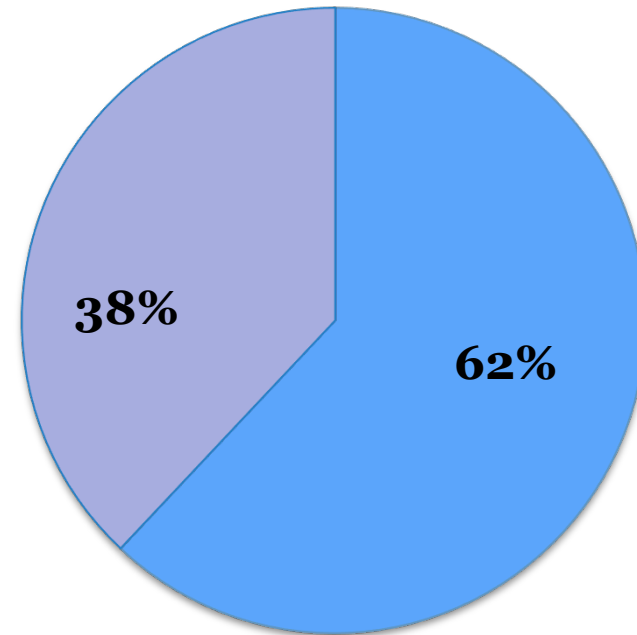
# Gender & Relationship Status

## Gender Spectrum



- Trans Masculine / FTM Spectrum
- Trans Feminine / MTF Spectrum

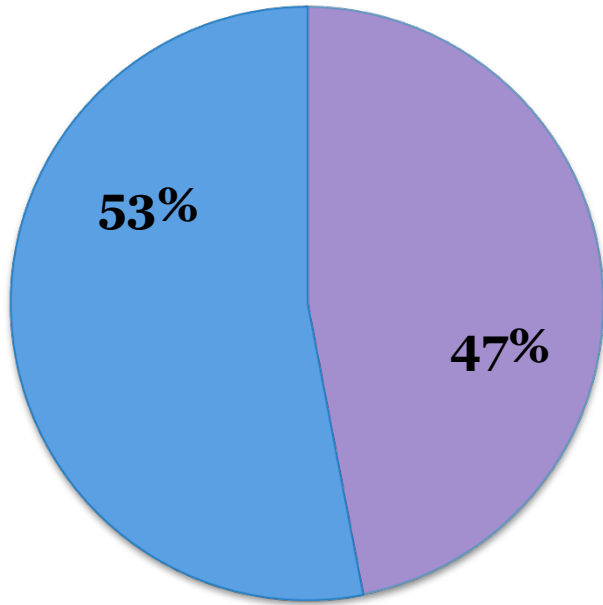
## Relationship Status



- Single
- In a relationship

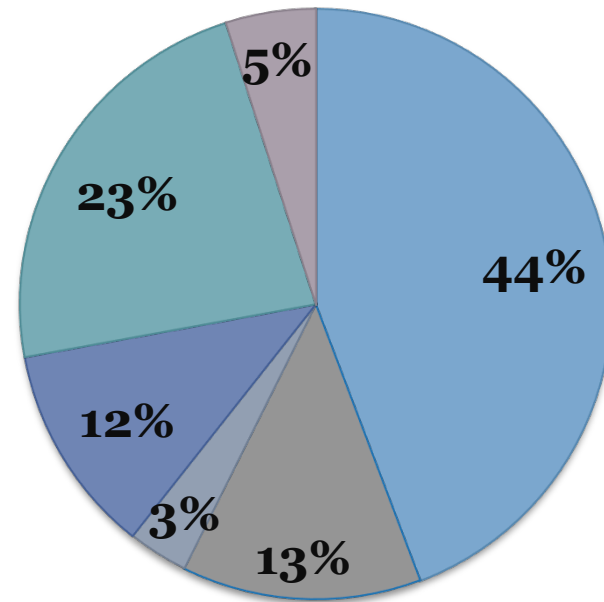
# Income & Employment

## Income



- Under \$35k
- 35K or more

## Employment



- Employed
- Out of Work
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Unable to work
- Prefer not to answer

# Social Support & Connectedness

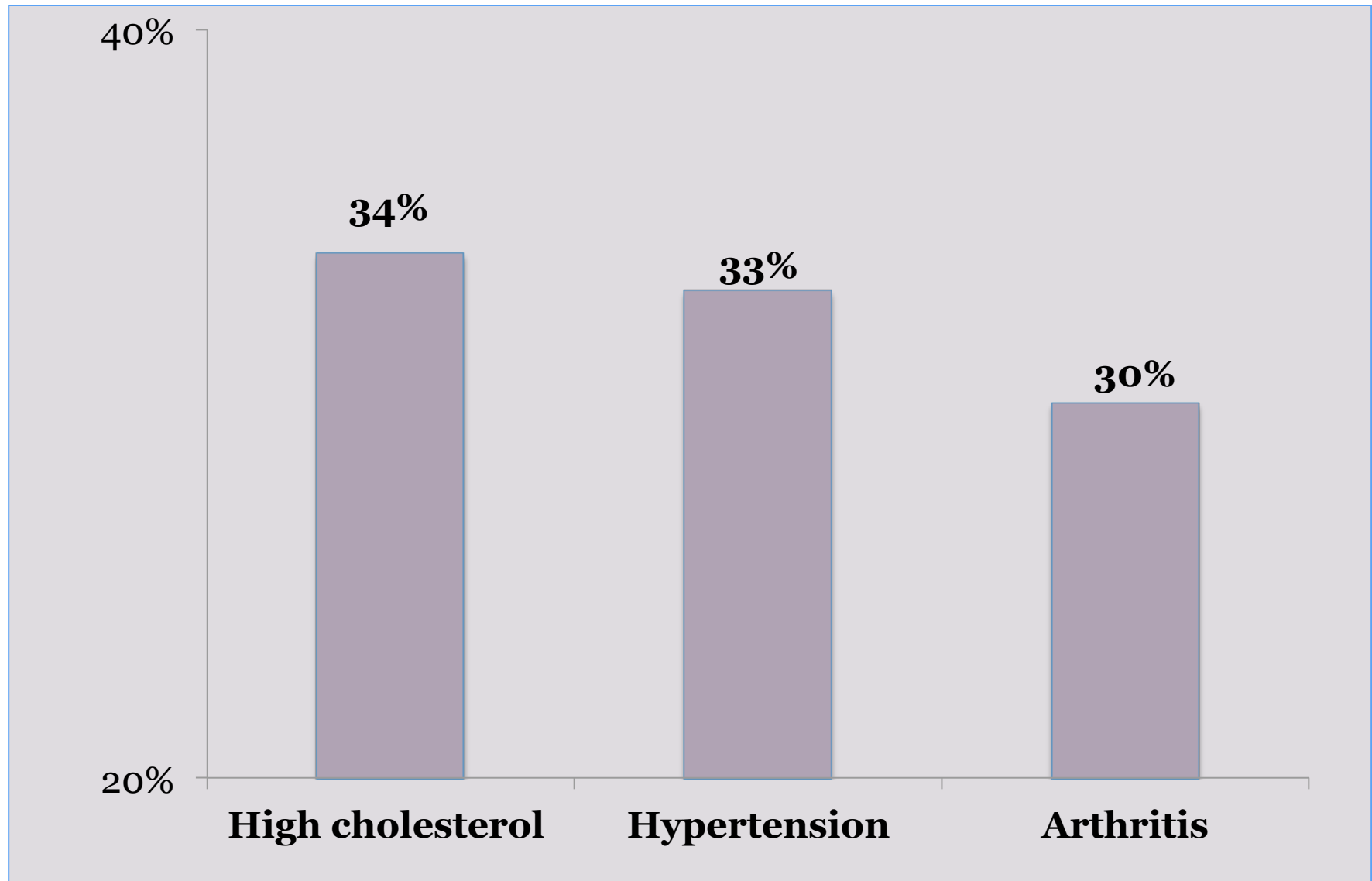
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**52%** of the sample had a family that supported their trans identity/expression

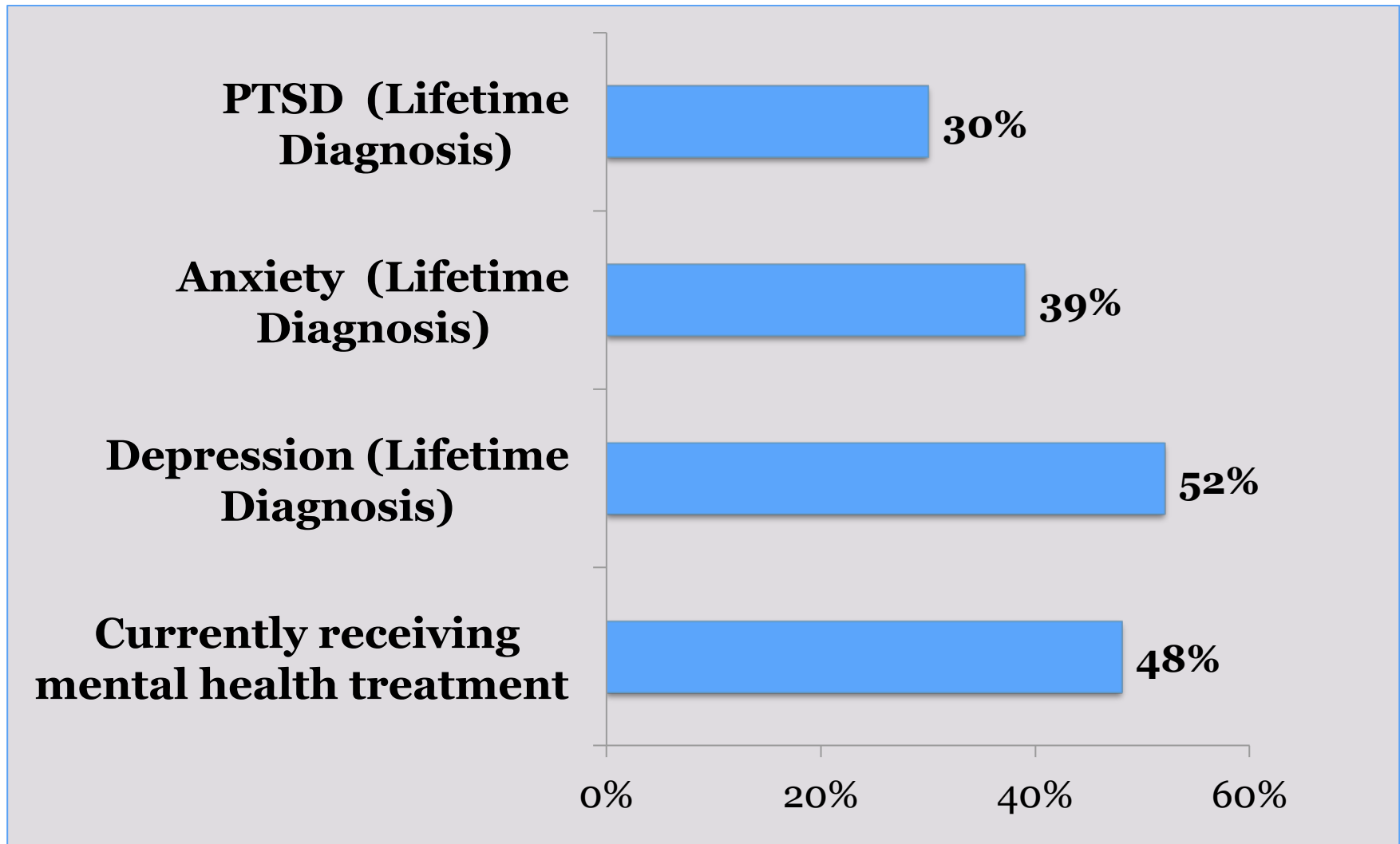
**4.2** → Mean number of close friends (SD=3.3)



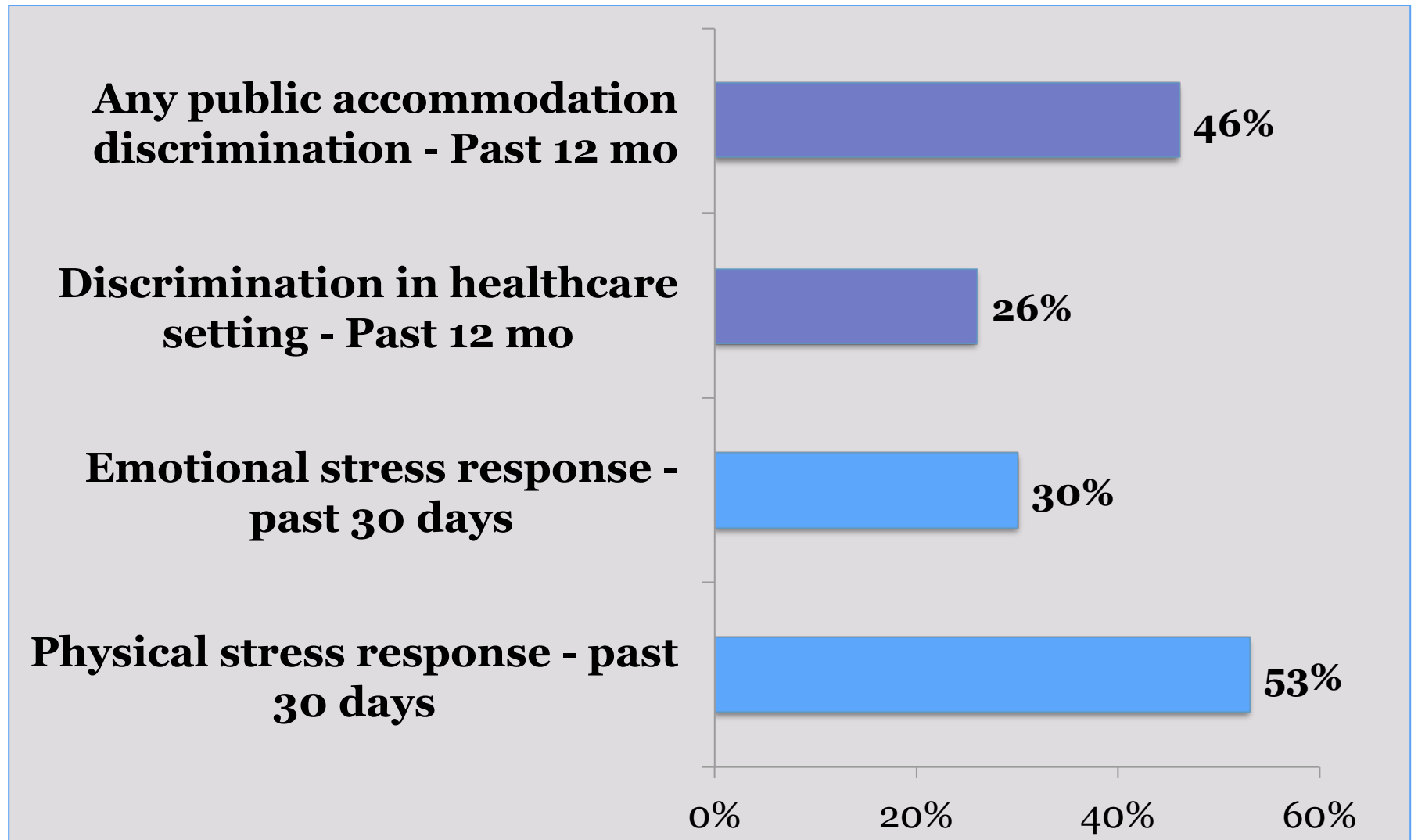
# Chronic Physical Health Conditions



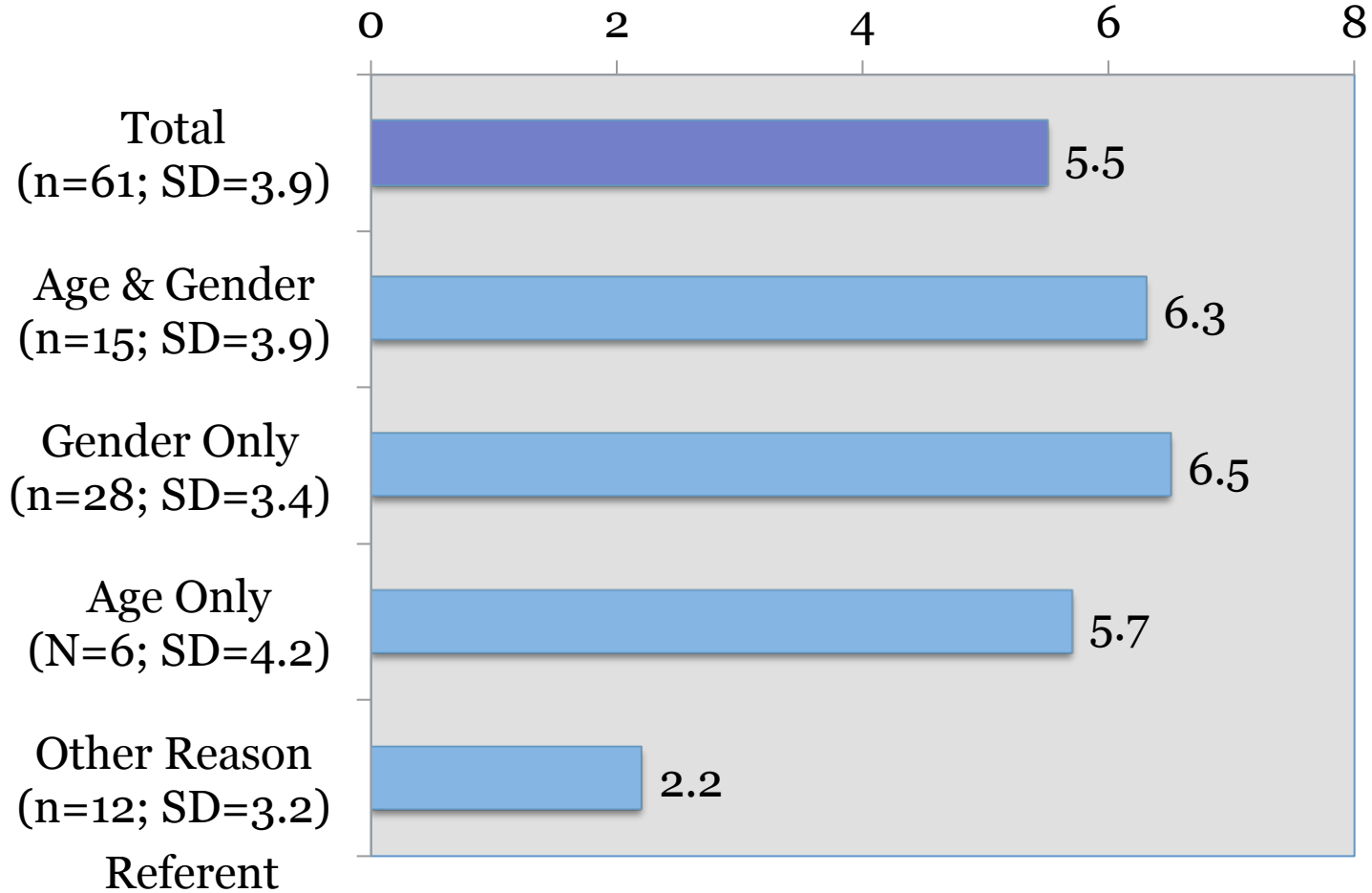
# Current and Lifetime Mental Health Outcomes



# Discrimination & Stress Responses



# Mean Everyday Discrimination Scores by Attribute



F Statistic = 4.41, p=0.007

Sum Score (Range 0-11)

## Association of Everyday Discrimination to Emotional Stress Response - Past 30 Days

	<b>aOR</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Primary Predictor</b>		
<b>Everyday discrimination</b>	<b>1.18</b> 1.10-1.27	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
<b>Covariates</b>		
<b>Number of close friends</b>	<b>0.81</b> 0.74-0.89	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
<b>Family supportive of gender identity/expression</b>	<b>1.99</b> 1.08-3.67	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>0.92</b> 0.87-0.97	<b>0.001</b>
<b>MTF spectrum</b>	<b>2.28</b> 1.15-4.50	<b>0.02</b>

## Association of Everyday Discrimination to Physical Stress Response - Past 30 Days

	<b>aOR</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Primary Predictor</b>		
<b>Everyday discrimination</b>	<b>1.19</b> 1.09-1.29	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
<b>Covariates</b>		
Number of close friends	0.96 0.87-1.05	0.34
Family supportive of gender identity/ expression	0.96 0.51-1.81	0.89
<b>Age</b>	<b>0.87</b> 0.82-0.93	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
MTF spectrum	1.84 0.82-0.93	0.09

# Summary



- Aging transgender adults in MA report **chronic mental and physical health conditions**
- **Discrimination is common** in everyday settings
- Those attributing discrimination to **age and/or gender reported significantly higher mean everyday discrimination scores** relative to those attributing discrimination to attributes other than age or gender
- **Everyday discrimination** associated with **higher odds of emotional and physical stress responses**



# Limitations and Strengths

24

## Limitations

- Cross-sectional data
- Non-probability sample

## Strengths

- Multi-sector, multi-disciplinary community engagement and partnerships
- State-wide data on hard to reach population







# Collaborators

## Co-Author



Sari Reisner, ScD, MA  
(Fenway & Harvard)

## Mentor



John Pachankis, PhD  
(Yale)

## Community Partners

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**Community Partners:** Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition: Jesse Bengenyi, Mason Dunn, Gunner Scott, Devyn Shea

**The Fenway Institute:** Julia Coffey-Esquivel, Amaya Perez-Brumer, Angela Robertson, Nelisa Rash, Layla Stamper, Dana Pardee, Justice Williams, Anum Awan

**Boston Medical Center Health Care for the Homeless Program:** Pam Klein, Rebecca Thal

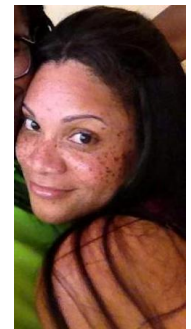
**The Network/La Red:** Tre'Andre Valentine

**AIDS Project Worcester:** Jesse Pack

**Boston GLASS:** Tharyn Grant

**Worcester State University:** Laura Mizock

**Photo Credit:** MTPC



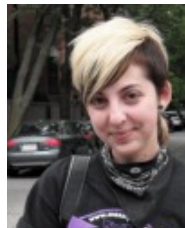
## Project VOICE Collaborators



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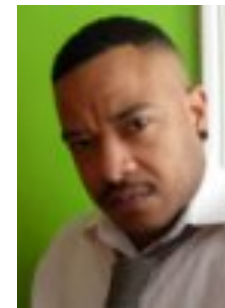
Katherine  
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Harvard)



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Bengenyi  
(MTPC)

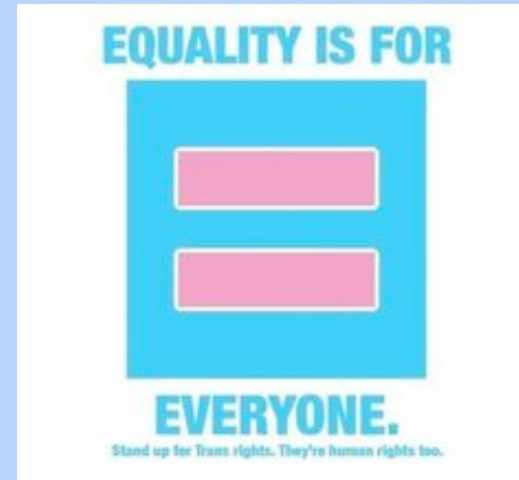


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Cahill, PhD  
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# Thank You! Questions?

27



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