

Update on the U.S. Progress in Measuring Gender Identity¹

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In a variety of ways the sexual and gender minority (SGM)² population in the United States is becoming more visible. While a few U.S. Federal agencies have collected information describing the SGM populations for over a decade, some aspects of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) have been less routinely studied than others. For instance, relatively little is known about their population size, demographic characteristics and well-being. While studying the SOGI population is multifaceted and complex, more representative and better quality data can contribute to meeting the needs of this population.

About 1.4 million people, or 0.6 percent of the U.S. population identifies as transgender. Information is being collected on a variety of U.S. Federal surveys and research is being conducted through online surveys and via cognitive interviews and focus groups. Through this work we continue to learn about social and demographic variations, geographic differences, and how and where transgender respondents see themselves in the data. Methodological best practices are being employed which have fostered awareness and collaboration across Federal agencies and beyond. This paper provides an update on some of the work currently underway to better understand the measurement of gender identity, in general, and aspects of the transgender population.

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² This paper refers to the population of interest as sexual and gender minority (SGM) rather than the more commonly used reference as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). This is done because SGM is more inclusive as it would include persons not specifically referenced by LGBT such as genderqueer, non-binary and gender nonconforming, among others.