

# LGBT+ Research and Programs



RTI International is committed to delivering the promise of science for global good. We believe that equal access to health care, education, economic opportunity, and political processes is a basic human right. We aim to improve the health, educational, political, and socio-economic well-being of LGBT+ populations in our communities and around the world through rigorous research, programs, and evaluation.

## Overview

LGBT+ Rising, a working group of the RTI Global Gender Center, spearheads efforts to support inclusion of LGBT+ populations and to build respect for LGBT+ human rights on all fronts. Our efforts have made RTI a leader in the advancement of LGBT+ well-being locally, nationally, and globally.

LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender; the plus (+) signifies all identities not encompassed in the LGBT initialism. RTI recognizes that words to describe sexual orientation and gender identity may change in different contexts and cultures. It is our intention to use LGBT+ as an inclusive term for all sexual and gender minorities.

Our multidisciplinary LGBT+ research has been showcased at more than 70 conferences around the globe since 2000 and has been published in more than 55 journal articles in journals such as *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, *Journal of Urban Health*, *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, and *Women's Health Issues*.

Our clients include state health departments, private and non-profit organizations, and federal agencies such as the following:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- Department of Justice
- National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Areas of Expertise

RTI partners with local, national, and international organizations to improve equality, inclusion, and health and overall well-being for LGBT+ individuals. Our diverse research experience and application of evidence-based approaches have achieved noteworthy benefits for LGBT+ populations, including:

- HIV prevention through developing, managing, and executing social marketing campaigns for HIV prevention research among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender populations
- Reducing tobacco use among LGBT+ adolescents
- Raising awareness through sexuality and diversity trainings

- Improving health-seeking behavior by researching and combatting stigma
- Exposing human rights violations by developing accessible, national reporting systems
- Reducing disparities, improving access to—and knowledge of—health care services, and developing resources for transgender people and their health care providers.

## Project Highlights

### Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of Communication Campaigns, Programs, and Interventions (2004–date)

Since 2004, RTI has conducted a myriad of communication projects with populations most at risk for HIV—including gay, bisexual, MSM, and transgender people, as well as health care and service providers. These projects have incorporated campaigns, interactive web-based tools, text messages, and social media to effectively promote HIV awareness, risk, dialogue, knowledge, prevention, and care while combating complacency, misperceptions, and stigma.

### Exploring Experiences of Disclosing HIV-Positive Status While in Prison (2013–date)

This project identifies and explores factors that affect an HIV-positive inmate's choice to disclose his or her HIV status to medical providers. This information is critical to avoid treatment interruptions for people who began antiretroviral therapy (ART) prior to incarceration and to offer ethical initiation of ART in correctional settings. Study participants included people who identify as transgender, bisexual, and MSM.

### Health Policy Project (2010–2016)

RTI measured the relationship between stigma and health-seeking behavior among female and male sex workers in Kenya in support of Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice to address human rights violations against LGBT+ populations. We also conducted gender and sexual diversity trainings for President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief staff members and implementing partners in Thailand, Vietnam, Rwanda, Uganda, and Washington, D.C.

### Healthy Weight in Lesbian and Bisexual Women: Striving for a Healthy Community (2012–2015)

We assisted in designing and evaluating Women's Health and Mindfulness—a group-based intervention addressing mindfulness, healthy eating, and physical activity to reduce chronic disease risk among overweight and obese lesbian and bisexual women ages 40 years and older.

### HIV Behavioral Survey of Racial and Ethnic Minority Transgender Persons (2006–2008)

RTI designed and pilot tested a questionnaire to capture epidemiologic and behavioral HIV/AIDS data specific to racial and ethnic minority transgender persons. A total of 228 transgender women participated in the survey, and results were used to make recommendations on how to modify the overall protocol, sampling methodology, and survey instruments.

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#### More Information

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