



Research Article

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Latin American Scientific Production on Transsexuality in Scopus, 2010-2022

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Abstract

The term transsexuality continues to be hotly debated in the literature and for many has become a scientific void. We sought to analyze the scientific production on transsexuality in Scopus, 2010-2022. Under a retrospective descriptive design, 624 articles were studied. It was found that 85.58% were research articles. Brazil has more research on the subject (41.83%); institutions in Brazil, Peru and Argentina have the highest production, and AIDS and Behavior and Plos One are the journals with the largest publications. The authors belong to Brazilian and Peruvian institutions. Research on transsexuality is minimal, so further research is needed.

Keywords: Scientific production, Transsexuality, Scientific publication, Scopus

1. Introduction

Transsexuality as a medical practice and category has gone through bioethical issues since its inception (Soley-Beltran, 2014). There is still a current debate about whether transsexuality should be considered a mental disorder (Mas Grau, 2017) or a sexual diversity that does not challenge heteronormativity (Estay G. et al., 2020).

From a technical perspective, transsexuality was reclassified and renamed in the DMS-5, it went from being a sexual identity disorder to gender dysphoria (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). Furthermore, in the version 11 of the International Classification of Diseases Manual of the World Health Organization (ICD-11, 2019), it went from being a gender identity disorder to being called gender incongruence (World Health Organization, 2019).

When reviewing scientific literature, it is undeniable to recognize that living under this condition is associated with developing psychological alterations that destabilize the state of mental health, especially in contexts where this condition is still not accepted and tolerated, being a taboo to talk about it (Sani et al., 2023). For instance, a study conducted on 1063 transgender people in the United Kingdom found an increased risk of suffering a depressive disorder when experiencing the process of body and hormonal transition (Witcomb et al., 2018). Another study conducted on 25 thousand American lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young people aged 13 to 24 found an increased risk of considering suicide to escape the social and family conflict involved in accepting their condition (Price-Feeney et al., 2020). Furthermore, another alteration found in this population is stress due to marginalization, as demonstrated in a study conducted on 225 transgender people in Nebraska who revealed that they experienced discrimination and transphobia, which caused psychological distress and high levels of emotional overload (Ralston et al., 2022). Consequently, we can assume that there is ample evidence to assume a prevalence, in transgender people, of mental health disorders. (Pinna et al., 2022).

In Latin America, the situation of transgender people is particular and very delicate in some countries of the region. Some studies have reported that this population suffers high rates of violence; therefore, the attention of researchers has focused on those who practice sex work, as they face greater risk (Malta et al., 2019). On the other hand, another study highlights that women face more challenges due to a lack of education and job opportunities, given that this population often lives amid high poverty levels (Gomes de Jesus et al., 2020). In the opinion of Henry et al. (2021), there is still a need for further research on mental health issues and discrimination in the LGBT community.

Given this situation, it is necessary to know the state of scientific production on transsexuality in this region, especially considering the analysis in an essential source of information such as the Scopus database. In this regard, similar initiatives were carried out in Spain, where Navarro-Pérez et al. (2015) analyzed the biomedical scientific production on transsexuality in the period 1973-2011, creating a crucial systematization of existing knowledge, guiding specialists to recognize that the dominant medical discourse prompted to treat the manifestations of transsexual people from a biologist perspective, which conceives transsexuality as an error of sex/gender correspondence. In the same vein, Sweileh (2018) Sweileh (2018), when conducting a bibliometric analysis of transgender health (1900 - 2017), found a remarkable growth of health research on transgender people, calling on researchers from different regions of the world to engage in research on the health and human rights of the transgender community.

Furthermore, in another bibliometric study (1990-2020), Arnull et al. (2021) found patterns and gaps in the sexual and reproductive health of transgender people, suggesting a comprehensive study and understanding of the rights of transgender people. However, in contexts where this condition is still not tolerated, as is the case in the Muslim scenario (Taslim et al., 2022), there is a great need for transgender research to raise general awareness, as in scenarios such as this there is still a need to resolve disputes about gender dysphoria..

As can be seen, there are scenarios where research on transsexuality is abundant and in others where it is necessary to promote more studies to raise awareness in the scientific, academic, and

political communities. This is why there is a need to analyze the scientific production in Latin America, a region where the transgender population is vulnerable due to social, religious, and other factors. Thus, having systematized information on this topic will promote the generation of theoretical and practical resources for health promotion and prevention of health problems in transgender people vulnerable to psychological alterations.

This study describes the scientific production on transsexuality, from the contribution of the studies published in Scopus by authors with Latin American affiliation.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

A retrospective descriptive study. The articles are from the Scopus database, from January 2010 to December 2022. To extract the documents, the descriptor "Transgender" OR "Transsexual" OR "Transsex" OR "Genderqueer" OR "Bigender" OR "Pangender" OR "sex reassignment" OR "gender reassignmen" OR "gender change" OR "sex change" OR "trans men" OR "transmen" OR "transman" OR "trans male" OR "trans masculine" OR "trans masculine" OR "transmasculine" OR "trans women" OR "transwomen" OR "transwoman" OR "trans female" OR "transfemale" OR "transfeminine" OR "gender dysphoria" OR "gender non-conform" OR "gender reassign" OR "gender reassign" OR "transvest" OR "travesty gender dysphori" OR "gender incongruen" OR "gender variant" OR "FTM individ" OR "MTF individ" were used in the abstract, title and keywords fields, documents containing Latin American universities and institutions as affiliation were considered. The variables author, country, institution and keywords were normalized to generate the scientific production report of the variable.

2.2 Sample

A total of 655 documents were retrieved, whose metadata was normalized by eliminating those studies that were not within the objectives of the study. The final sample was 624 documents (Fig. 1).

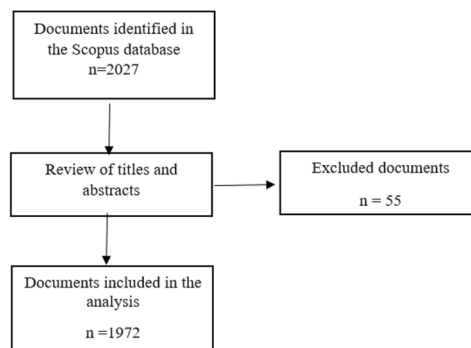


Figure 1. Methodological process of search, retrieval, and selection of information for analysis

2.3 Data Analysis

With the information found, a database was created in Microsoft Excel that included the metadata of each of the articles, and VOSviewer software was used to create a network with the main thematic axes associated with the keywords. Since the study does not involve human beings, the approval of an ethics committee was not required.

3. Results

We found 624 articles indexed in Scopus, whose authors belonged to Latin American institutions. Seven types of publishable documents were defined for the study. The 85,58% were research articles, while in smaller percentage were editorials and books, represented by 0,96% respectively. In addition, as of 2018, the number of articles has increased significantly.

Table 1. Types of documents of publications on Transsexuality in Latin America

Year	Article		Review		Letter		Note		Conference Paper		Editorial		Book		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2010	5	0.80	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.16	6	0.96
2011	2	0.32	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	0.32
2012	10	1.60	3	0.48	1	0.16	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	14	2.24
2013	7	1.12	1	0.16	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.16	9	1.44
2014	20	3.21	1	0.16	1	0.16	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.16	0	0.00	23	3.69
2015	19	3.04	3	0.48	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	22	3.53
2016	37	5.93	5	0.80	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	0	0.00	2	0.32	47	7.53
2017	46	7.37	2	0.32	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.16	1	0.16	0	0.00	50	8.01
2018	60	9.62	2	0.32	2	0.32	0	0.00	2	0.32	0	0.00	1	0.16	67	10.74
2019	68	10.90	4	0.64	1	0.16	4	0.64	2	0.32	1	0.16	0	0.00	80	12.82
2020	70	11.22	6	0.96	6	0.96	2	0.32	1	0.16	0	0.00	0	0.00	85	13.62
2021	97	15.54	6	0.96	0	0.00	2	0.32	1	0.16	1	0.16	0	0.00	107	17.15
2022	93	14.90	10	1.60	2	0.32	3	0.48	1	0.16	2	0.32	1	0.16	112	17.95

Brazil is the country with the highest number of published studies on transsexuality, with 41.83%, followed by Peru, Mexico and Argentina, which exceed 5.00% of the production. Finally, four countries (Honduras, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela) have two studies developed in the years under study (Table 2).

Table 2. Latin American countries with scientific production on Transsexuality

Country	n	%
Brazil	261	41.83
Peru	105	16.83
Mexico	60	9.62
Argentina	52	8.33
Colombia	30	4.81
Chile	29	4.65
Puerto Rico	21	3.37
Dominican Republic	12	1.92
Guatemala	10	1.60
Panama	9	1.44
Ecuador	8	1.28
Costa Rica	5	0.80
Cuba	4	0.64
El Salvador	4	0.64
Haiti	3	0.48
Jamaica	3	0.48
Honduras	2	0.32
Paraguay	2	0.32
Trinidad and Tobago	2	0.32
Venezuela	2	0.32

107 Latin American institutions have participated in the dissemination of research on transsexuality. Table 3 shows the list of the top ten, among which institutions in Brazil, Peru and Argentina stand out, with 20 or more articles published. There are five non-university institutions. In addition, the University of Sao Paulo occupies the first place in the Ibero-American Ranking of Higher Education Institutions, 2021.

Table 3. Latin American institutions involved in transsexuality research

Institution	Country	SIR IBER 2020	n
Universidade de São Paulo	Brazil	1	70
Fundacao Oswaldo Cruz	Brazil	-	53
Asociación Civil Impacta Salud y Educación	Peru	-	52
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	11	51
Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia	Peru	153	48
Hospital de Clinicas de Porto Alegre	Brazil	-	43
INI - Instituto Nacional de Infectologia Evandro Chagas	Brazil	-	33
Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	93	31
Epicentro Salud	Peru	-	27
Universidad de Buenos Aires	Argentina	17	21

The results of authors who have researched transsexuality are presented. Of the 243 authors analyzed, researchers from countries with affiliation to institutions in Brazil and Peru stand out. The authors usually publish their research in collaboration, linking with other institutions (see Table 4)

Table 4. Latin American authors with the highest production of documents on transsexuality

Author	Affiliation	H Index	Articles published
Lobato, Maria Inês Rodrigues	Hospital de Clinicas de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil	23	31
Brandelli Costa, Angelo	Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil	17	29
Grinsztejn, Beatriz Gilda Jegerhorn	Instituto Nacional de Infectologia Evandro Chagas (INI), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	54	29
Sánchez, Jorge L.	Info Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru	41	27
Veloso, V. G.	Info Instituto Nacional de Infectologia Evandro Chagas (INI), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	37	26
Konda, Kelika A.	Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru	23	22
Fontanari, Anna Martha Vaitzes	Hospital de Clinicas de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil	12	21
Schwarz, Karine	Hospital de Clinicas de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil	10	21
Cáceres, Carlos F.	Info Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru	35	20
Silva-Santisteban, Alfonso	Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru	15	20

The list of the ten journals with the highest number of articles on Transsexuality is presented, among which AIDS and Behavior and Plos One stand out, each with more than twenty articles published. Eighty percent of them were classified in Q1. The thematic areas of these ten journals were Medicine, Psychology, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and Multidisciplinary. Journals from the United States and the United Kingdom are the most preferred by researchers in the Latin American region (see Table 5).

Table 5. Most productive journals on transsexuality

Journal	Country	Quartile	Thematic Area	Documents
AIDS And Behavior	United States	Q1	Medicine and Psychology	39
Plos One	United States	Q1	Multidisciplinary	22
Journal Of The International AIDS Society	United States	Q1	Medicine	17
Archives Of Sexual Behavior	United States	Q1	Arts and Humanities and Psychology	16
AIDS Care Psychological And Socio Medical Aspects Of AIDS HIV	United Kingdom	Q1	Medicine; Psychology and Social Sciences	15
Transgender Health	United States	Q1	Medicine and Social Sciences	13
International Journal Of STD And AIDS	United Kingdom	Q2	Medicine	12
Cadernos De Saude Publica	Brazil	Q2	Medicine	10
Global Public Health	United Kingdom	Q1	Medicine	10
BMJ Open	United Kingdom	Q1	Medicine	8

Table 6 shows the list of the most cited articles (more than 100 citations). The Grant, Robert M. et al. (2014) study has 808 citations. In addition, the articles with the most citations date from 2014 onwards.

Table 6. Transgender articles with the highest number of citations

Title	Author	Journal	Year	Citations
Uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis, sexual practices, and HIV incidence in men and transgender women who have sex with men: A cohort study	Grant, Robert M. et al	The Lancet Infectious Diseases	2014	808
HIV risk and preventive interventions in transgender women sex workers	Poteat, T. et al	The Lancet	2015	231
HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis in transgender women: A subgroup analysis of the iPrEx trial	Deutsch, M.B. et al	The Lancet HIV	2015	171
Understanding the HIV/AIDS epidemic in transgender women of Lima, Peru: Results from a sero-epidemiologic study using respondent driven sampling	Silva-Santisteban, A. et al	AIDS and Behavior	2012	155
Cabotegravir for HIV prevention in cisgender men and transgender women	Landovitz, R.J. et al	New England Journal of Medicine	2021	126
Sex steroids and cardiovascular outcomes in transgender individuals: A systematic review and meta-analysis	Maraka, S. et al	Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism	2017	123
Access to health services by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons: systematic literature review	Alencar Albuquerque, G., et al	BMC International Health and Human Rights	2016	122
Syphilis predicts HIV incidence among men and transgender women who have sex with men in a preexposure prophylaxis trial	Solomon, M.M. et al.	Clinical Infectious Diseases	2014	116
HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis in men who have sex with men and transgender women: A secondary analysis of a phase 3 randomized controlled efficacy trial	Buchbinder, S.P.	The Lancet Infectious Diseases	2014	102

Out of a total of 3417 keywords in the 624 retrieved papers, 223 stood out as important descriptors, according to the bibliometric network analysis (Fig. 2). In this case, the display density (highlighted in yellow) indicates clusters of relatively related keywords. Thus, it was observed that the descriptor with the highest presence was "transgender," followed by others such as major clinical study; human immunodeficiency and virus; sexual behavior; etc.

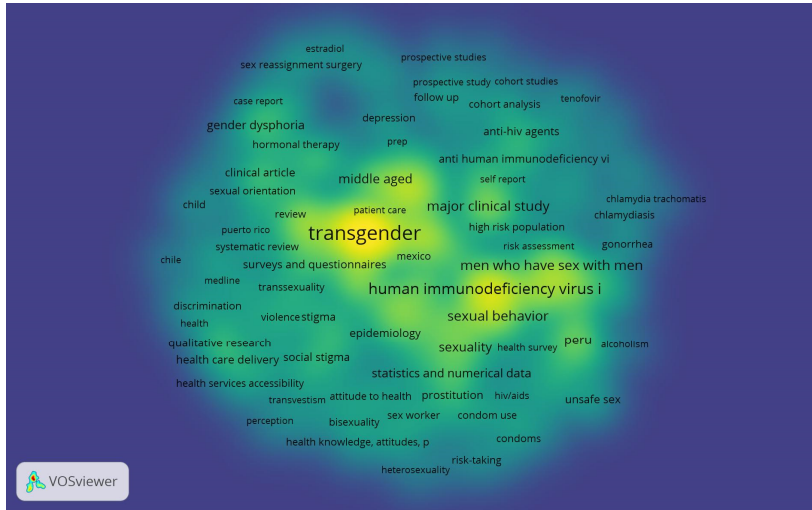


Figure 2. Visualization of the keyword occurrence network.

4. Discussion

Transsexualism describes people who experience distress about their gender identity and the sex they had. (Arcelus et al., 2015) and despite its importance as a research topic, it is still in its infancy in Latin America (García-Jiménez et al., 2021). In this sense, the objective of this study was to analyze the Latin American scientific production on transsexuality in Scopus, 2010-2022.

The results show 624 articles of which the majority corresponds to the type of original articles with 85.58%, which means that the largest proportion of the Latin American contribution is original research. This result is similar to other scientific fields where 80% predominates as Latin American contribution of original articles by scientific production by country (Chinchilla-Rodríguez et al., 2015) and in some areas reaching more than 90% (Coimbra et al., 2019). Likewise, year 2018 shows the highest number of articles, a fact that is also corroborated in other research where the same year shows remarkable growth (Sachdeva et al., 2021). In Latin America, remarkable growth was seen in 2018 due to the licensing processes of national universities (Mayta-Tristán et al., 2019), as is the Peruvian case.

The Latin American country with the highest production is Brazil, followed by Peru, Mexico, and Argentina. This result is similar to other studies where Brazil leads in different scientific areas (Hernández et al., 2021). Several studies recognize Brazil as the largest producer of Latin American research on transsexuality (W. M. Sweileh, 2018), since after English, Portuguese is the language most used in scientific publications on transgender sexual health issues (Arnull et al., 2021), although globally it is the United States that leads the largest scientific production on the mental health of the LGBT community (W. Sweileh, 2022). Some studies also recognize Peru as the Latin American country that is developing more scientific efforts in LGBT research (An & Batra, 2022).

The institutions with the highest production are the University of Sao Paulo and the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, an aspect that has also been pointed out in different research emphasizing the scientific capacity of Brazilian institutions (León et al., 2020). In the case of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, its interest in financing various inclusion and scientific dissemination initiatives is well known (Mansur et al., 2021). On the Peruvian side are the Asociación Civil Impacta Salud y Educación and the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia. Some bibliometric studies for the Peruvian case share the result of the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia as an active institution in this field of knowledge (Arnull et al., 2021).

The authors with the highest production are Maria Inés Lobato with 31 published articles, followed by Angelo Brandelli with 29 published articles. Lobato's research focuses in the area of behavioral sciences and psychiatry (Chinazzo et al., 2021). On the Peruvian side is Jorge Sanchez from the Asociación Impacta Salud with representative research on transgender women in Peru (Perez-Brumer et al., 2021) and Kelika Konda, a researcher at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, with an emphasis on the sexual health of transgender women (Guillen-Diaz-Barriga et al., 2022). It is worth noting that the first author worldwide is Gooren L.J.G. who published more than 104 studies on this topic (W. M. Sweileh, 2018).

Among the most productive journals, AIDS And Behavior and Plos One stand out with 39 and 22 articles, respectively. This result is also remarked in other studies on transgender health, especially the AIDS and Behavior journal (Arnull et al., 2021). Other studies highlight the Journal of Adolescent Health (W. Sweileh, 2022) followed by the Journal of LGBT on the mental health of transgender people as the most prominent in this field (W. M. Sweileh, 2022).

Among the most cited articles was that of Robert Grant et al. with more than 808 citations, a study that also recognized as the most cited study in this field (Arnull et al., 2021). Similar studies show that case studies and review articles were the most used study type, especially when it comes to the most cited articles (Oleru & Rohde, 2022). Among the most commonly used descriptors is "transgender;" this term was welcomed by Brazilian researchers since, in Brazilian culture, the recognition of transgender people is part of the Brazilian cultural identity (Gomes de Jesus et al., 2020; Malta et al., 2020). The terms "Major clinical study" and "Human immunodeficient virus" are descriptors related to health and are crucially relevant within the trans community (Arnull et al., 2021; W. M. Sweileh, 2018) as this community faces enormous challenges in healthcare (Moseson et al., 2020). Finally, the descriptor of "Sexual behavior" is a term related to behaviors in the trans community, which may have issues with drug use, risk behaviors, depression, suicide, and mental health (Clements-Nolle et al., 2001) and has been reviewed in diverse studies in Latin America (Billings et al., 2021; Frio & França, 2021; Gabster et al., 2022).

This study has some limitations. It should be noted that not all publications on transsexuality are indexed in Scopus, so some publications have likely been lost, which is a common limitation in this field (W. M. Sweileh, 2018). It is advisable to use other more diverse databases to expand on what was found in this study. Regarding the word search of this study, it is likely that some other terms have been excluded that could have been relevant to this study. Finally, it would be advisable to conduct comparative studies of research productivity on this topic with other continents.

Despite these limitations, we consider that this study is a significant contribution from a Latin American perspective and on a topic that is still considered taboo in many parts of the world. In conclusion, this study reports 624 articles published and indexed in Scopus with authors with Latin American affiliation. Eighty-five point fifty eight percent represent original articles with higher production in 2018. Brazil is the country that concentrates the highest Latin American scientific production together with the University of Sao Paulo. Likewise, the most used descriptors are "transgender," "major clinical study," "human immunodeficient virus," and "sexual behavior."

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