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Victimization of European transgender and gender diverse people: a systematic review of quantitative studies through the lens of the gender minority stress and resilience framework

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Abstract

Introduction: Transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people experience a greater incidence of mental health problems compared to cisgender counterparts. Such disparities are associated with victimization of gender nonconformity and can be understood through the gender minority stress and resilience (GMSR) framework. As most of the reviews has been addressed to U.S. context, the current study aimed at systematically reviewing evidence on the relationships between victimization, resilience, and mental health among European TGD individuals through the lens of the GMSR framework. *Methods:* A systematic search was conducted in PsychINFO, PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, based on PRISMA 2020 guidelines, and conducted for publications from the last 20 years. It was based on Boolean operators to combine terms related to minority stress (i.e., victimization, proximal stressors, and resilience), TGD identities, and mental health. A quality assessment of eligible papers was conducted through the National Institutes of Health’s Quality Assessment Tool for Observational Cohort and Cross-Sectional Studies and Cohen’s kappa was used to calculate agreement between evaluators, yielded a score of .91 (i.e., strong agreement). *Results:* Overall, 29 studies were included in the present systematic review. Almost all studies (n = 27, 93.1%) were cross-sectional in nature, whereas 2 (6.9%) used a longitudinal design. Sample sizes ranged from 55 to 15,845 participants. We found that distal stressors were identified as predictors of poorer mental health, with gender-related victimization emerging as the most documented risk factor. The significant role of proximal stressors was also highlighted, with some mediation analyses detecting an indirect effect on mental health. Resilience-promoting factors buffering the impact of victimization and proximal stressors were also identified, including self-esteem, pride, transitioning, and social support. The results confirmed that gender minority stress factors are crucial in



the development of mental health problems among European TGD individuals. *Conclusions:* The studies reviewed have several limitations, including lack of longitudinal designs, sampling bias, variability in measurement methods, and unaccounted for ethnic variables. Research and clinical recommendations are reported.