



Bureau of Justice Statistics

Methodology and measurement of gender identity in the National Crime Victimization Survey

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Topics

- National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) overview
- Adding gender identity (GI) measures to the NCVS
- Cognitive testing of GI measures
- Results from monitoring the GI items, including field performance and data quality measures



NCVS overview

- One of two main sources of data on crime in the United States (other is FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program)
- Collects information on nonfatal violent and property crimes reported and not reported to police involving persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households
- The main source of national data on policy-relevant types of criminal victimization: *intimate partner violence, hate crime, workplace violence, injury, firearms and crime, cost of crime, and the "dark figure" of unreported crime*
- Produces national statistics on violent and property victimization, characteristics of crimes and victims, and consequences of victimization



NCVS methodology

- Panel design survey: households remain in sample for 3.5 years
- Everyone in the sampled household age 12 or older interviewed every 6 months, for a total of 7 interviews
- \approx 250,000 persons age 12 or older in U.S. households interviewed per year
- Mode: first interviews in person, subsequent interviews in person or by phone
- Self-report survey
 - Respondents self-report information such as age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin
 - Persons asked about criminal victimizations experienced during prior 6 months



Background and impetus for adding GI to the NCVS

- NCVS is undergoing a long-term redesign
- BJS added GI to the NCVS in July 2016 among near-term changes
 - Sexual orientation, veteran status, citizenship, and disability status were asked of all respondents, not just crime victims
- GI items are timely and relevant
 - Have been identified in research as correlates of victimization
 - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 explicitly bars discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) status to ensure equal access to key services
 - U.S. federal hate crime statutes also prohibit discrimination
 - Stakeholder group interest in these measures



Defining sexual orientation and GI

- Sexual orientation
 - Sexual attraction – an individual’s sexual interest in others; attraction to men, women, or both men and women; or nonattraction to others
 - Sexual behavior – whether an individual has sexual partners who are of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both
 - **Sexual identity** – the way a person self-identifies with a given sexual orientation
- **Sex** – a person’s biological status (male, female, or intersex)
- **Gender identity** – a person’s internal sense of gender
- Gender expression – the behavioral dimension of gender, or how one expresses identity through appearance and behavior



Question development: GI

- Recommended two-step approach
 - First ask about sex at birth and then current GI
 - This method has been successful in identifying transgender individuals
- Tested questions reflect recommendations from the Gender Identity in U.S. Surveillance group and the California Health Interview Survey
- BJS collaborated with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to develop measures to be implemented consistently across federal surveys
- GI questions were previously tested using cognitive interviews with persons age 18 or older



Cognitive testing

- Center for Behavioral Science Methods at the U.S. Census Bureau conducted cognitive testing
- Items were tested along with the revised instrument for the 2016 NCVS Supplemental Victimization Survey, which focuses on stalking victimization
- N = 60 interviews
- Respondents were age 16 or older
- Tested item wording, placement of items within the context of the NCVS, clarity and comprehension for respondents, and ease of administration for interviewers
- A small number of respondents identified as something other than straight; no respondents identified as transgender
- SOGI items performed well overall



Tested questions: GI

- What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Refused
 - Don't know
- Do you currently describe yourself as male, female, or transgender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - None of these

[Alternative Q: On your original birth certificate, was your sex assigned as male or female?]

[Alternative Q: Do you currently describe yourself as a man, woman, or transgender person?]

- Just to confirm, you were assigned {FILL} at birth and now describe yourself as {FILL} Is that correct?



Placement, frequency, and age of administration

- SOGI questions were added to NCVS demographic section
 - Asked after all questions about experiences with criminal victimization
 - Answered by an individual rather than household respondents (no proxy interviews)
- Questions administered to all persons age 16 or older
 - Both victims and nonvictims from July 2016–June 2019
 - Only victims from July 2019–present



Respondent sex on NCVS household roster

- Household respondent completes a roster at the first interview, which is verified at subsequent interviews
- The household respondent provides demographic information about other persons in the household (sex, age, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, and educational attainment)
- Question on sex:
 - Is [\[household member name\]](#) male or female?
 1. Male
 2. Female



GI item performance

- Low item nonresponse
 - 0.97% refusal nonresponse
 - 1.33% total nonresponse
- Nonresponse was related to age and mode of interview
 - One-year increase in age increased the odds of nonresponse to GI by a factor of 1.01
 - The effects of interviews conducted by phone, compared to interviews conducted in person, increased the odds of nonresponse by a factor of 1.77

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on **unweighted** data from the U.S. Census Bureau, NCVS, July-December 2016.



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GI item performance (cont.)

- Low survey breakoffs
 - Of all breakoffs,
 - 0.10% happened during sex at birth question
 - 0.04% happened during current GI question
 - None occurred during gender confirmation

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on **unweighted** data from the U.S. Census Bureau, NCVS, July-December 2016.



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GI item performance (cont.)

- Meaning of *none of these* response category for the current GI question was unclear
 - Respondents may use this category for different reasons
 - More detailed information was not collected for this response category
 - Do not include in transgender estimates
- 1.7% of cases from July to December 2016 had a mismatch between sex on the roster and both GI questions (sex assigned at birth and current GI)



NCVS response distributions: GI questions

Sex at birth

Response option	Percent
Male	46.04%
Female	52.64%
Refused	0.95%
Don't know	0.10%
Total responses	101,686

Current GI

Response option	Percent
Male	46.05%
Female	52.68%
Transgender	0.05%
None of these	0.17%
Refused	0.75%
Don't know	0.03%
Total responses	101,686

Gender confirmation

Response option	Percent
Yes	92.73%
No	0.00%
Refused	4.85%
Don't know	2.42%
Total responses	165

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Gender confirmation table includes only those who had discordant responses to the questions on sex at birth and current GI.

*Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on **unweighted** data from the U.S. Census Bureau, NCVS, July-December 2016.*



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NCVS response distribution: Combined GI questions

Combined answers to questions on sex at birth and current GI

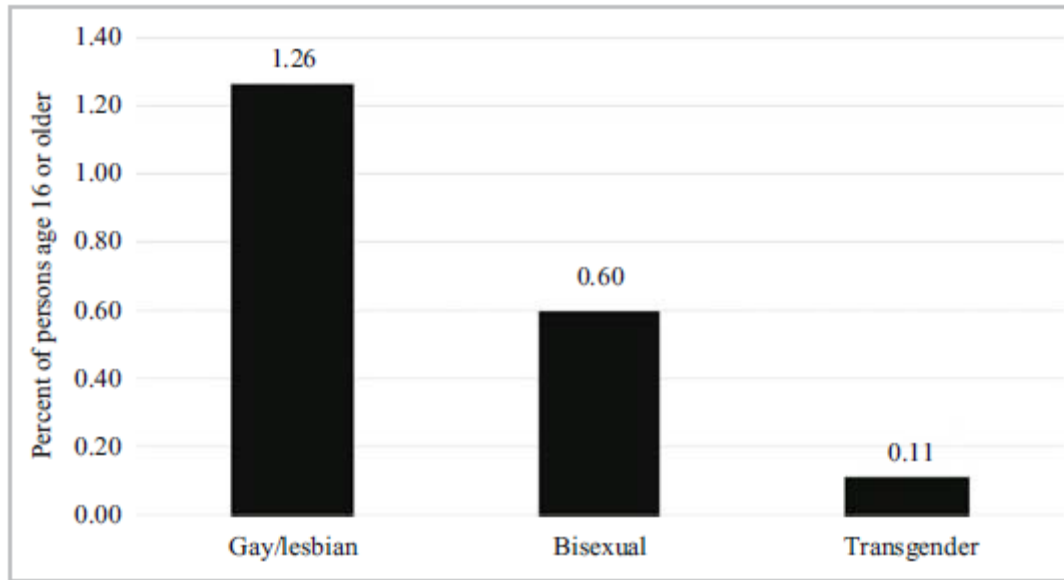
Response option	Percent
Male	45.90%
Female	52.50%
Transgender*	0.10%
None of these	0.17%
Refused	0.97%
Don't know	0.08%
Total responses	101,686

**Includes respondents with discordant responses to the questions on sex at birth and current GI. Respondents may have identified using the transgender response category or identified with a gender different from their assigned sex at birth.*

*Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on **unweighted** data from the U.S. Census Bureau, NCVS, July-December 2016.*



Weighted percent of persons age 16 or older who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on **weighted** data from the U.S. Census Bureau, NCVS, July-December 2016.



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Two-step method for collecting GI

- Among transgender respondents,
 - 51.7% identified as transgender in the current GI question
 - 48.3% reported discordant sex at birth and current GI
- These data indicate it is important to collect GI with the two-step method to accurately measure the transgender population
- If only current GI were collected, about half of transgender respondents may not have been identified as transgender if they selected only their current GI (male or female) and not transgender



NCVS data and findings

- Data publicly available on the 2017-2019 NCVS data files
 - National Archive of Criminal Justice Data
<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/NACJD/series/00095>



Research opportunities with these data on victim demographics

- Is the transgender community at greater risk for violent victimization?
- Are persons who identify as transgender more or less likely to report victimization to police?
- Are persons who identify as transgender more or less likely to receive victim services?
- Are LGBT females at greater risk of victimization than LGBT males?



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