

# Uptake of Mpox vaccination among transgender people and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men among sexually-transmitted infection clinic clients in Vancouver, BC



Uptake of Mpox vaccine among eligible transgender people and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (T/GBM) was high following the start of the vaccination campaign. Yet, sociodemographic factors played a critical role in vaccine uptake. We need early, intentional and diverse engagement with T/GBM populations to increase access to Mpox and other targeted vaccination programs. Achieving vaccine equity will be key in preventing and controlling Mpox.

## Introduction

We evaluated the Mpox vaccination campaigns' impact for T/GBM. This was a critical part of the primary public health strategy for controlling the 2022 Mpox outbreak. We studied uptake of the Mpox vaccine among clients of an urban STI clinic in British Columbia (BC) who were:

- Transgender, and
- Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

We collected data in August 2022, approximately 5-7 weeks after the start of a first-dose vaccination program.

## Summary of Findings

Among vaccine-eligible participants identifying as T/GBM:

- 65.7% had received their first dose\*,
- Being unvaccinated was more common for those who identified as bisexual or heteroflexible/mostly straight and who spent less time with other T/GBM,
- Vaccine acceptability, perceived benefits and safety of the vaccine were high,
- Uptake of Mpox vaccine varied by socioedemographic factors,
- Uptake was lower among participants promotional channels did not reach,

- Those not connected to T/GBM communities were exposed to fewer cues to get vaccinated (e.g., fewer participants knew someone with Mpox, saw information promoting the vaccine, or had been recommended to get the vaccine),
- Unvaccinated participants were more likely to identify constraints in accessing the vaccine, and barriers such as not being able access vaccination clinics and issues around privacy when presenting for vaccination,
- 85% of those unvaccinated at time of survey were willing to receive the vaccine.

\*This may be an underestimate since eligible individuals are still receiving their vaccines in Vancouver.

## Calls to Action

- We need early, intentional and diverse ways of engagement with T/GBM populations to increase access to vaccination programs, and continue engagement efforts to promote the first and second doses of the vaccine,
- Even though our study only focused on BC, Canada, the scientific community and decision makers need to address global vaccine equity. Countries where Mpox disease has been endemic can also benefit from addressing these equity gaps.

Gilbert, M., Ablona, A., Chang, H., Grennan, T., Irvine, M. A., Racey, C. S., Salway, T., Naus, M., Dawar, M., and Ogilvie, G. Uptake of Mpox vaccination among transgender people and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men among sexually-transmitted infection clinic clients in Vancouver, British Columbia, Vaccine, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2023.02.075>