

# Asking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) in Chinese:

Improving SOGI Data Collection and Healthcare Experiences for Chinese Transgender and Nonbinary Patients

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PPAF Presentation to Medical Directors

July 26, 2023

# Outline

- Background
- SOGI Mandarin study
- Training to CTNB staff
- Pre- and Post-survey results
- Conclusion
- Next Steps

# Background

- Why collect sexual orientation & gender identity (SOGI) data?
  - Recommended by IOM (2011) due to high rates of mental illness, substance use, suicidal ideation/attempts in the LGBTQ+ population
  - Trans API individuals in Bay Area: 71% considered suicide, 29% attempted, 48% do not feel comfortable seeing doctors (compared with 23% national trans population) (APIENC 2020)
- At an SF Clinic serving Asian immigrants and refugees (CTNB)
  - ~70% of patients not asked about SOGI
  - Many clinicians feel uncomfortable asking about SOGI due to lack of training and not knowing how to ask

# Asian Cultural Values

- Collectivism
- Filial piety
- Adherence to traditional gender roles
- Family recognition through achievement
- Emotional self-control
- Humility

留白 (Liú bái): leave blank

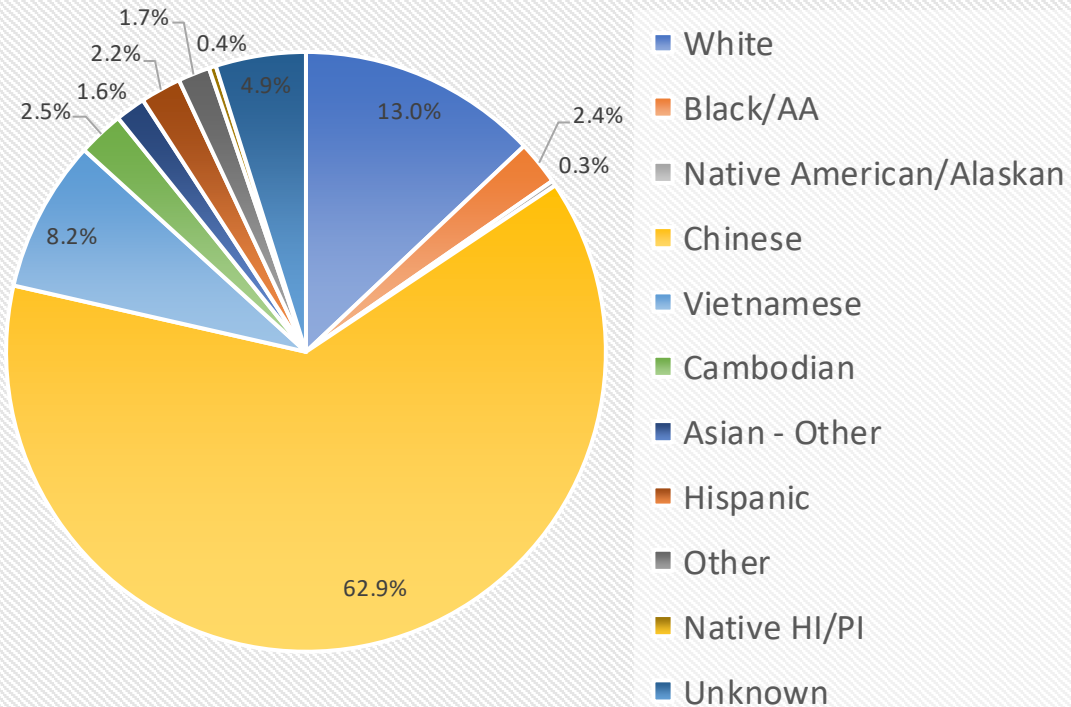
枪打出头鸟 (Qiāng dǎchū tóu niǎo): the shot hits the bird that pokes its head out

- ↑ Asian cultural values → ↓ disclosure of sexual orientation
  - Mediated by internalized heterosexism (internalized stigma)
  - Gender identity may be similarly challenging to express/disclose

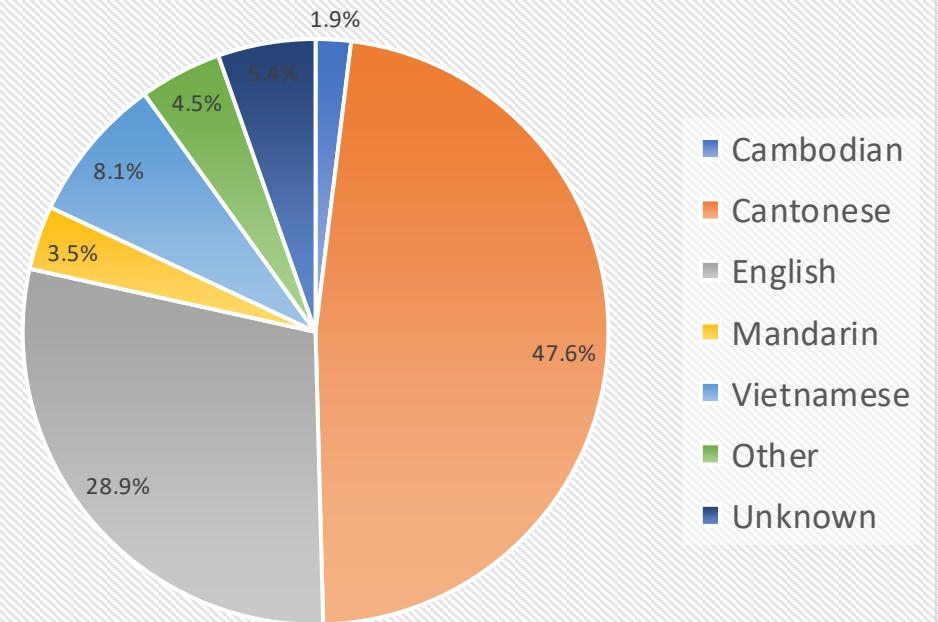
# CTNB Clinic Data

# CTNB Demographics

CTNB Client Race/Ethnicity (2022)

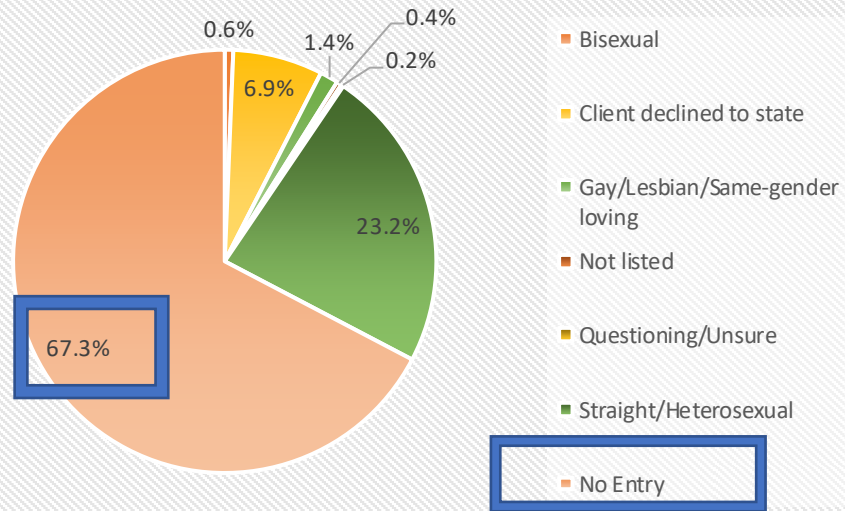


CTNB Client Primary Language (2022)

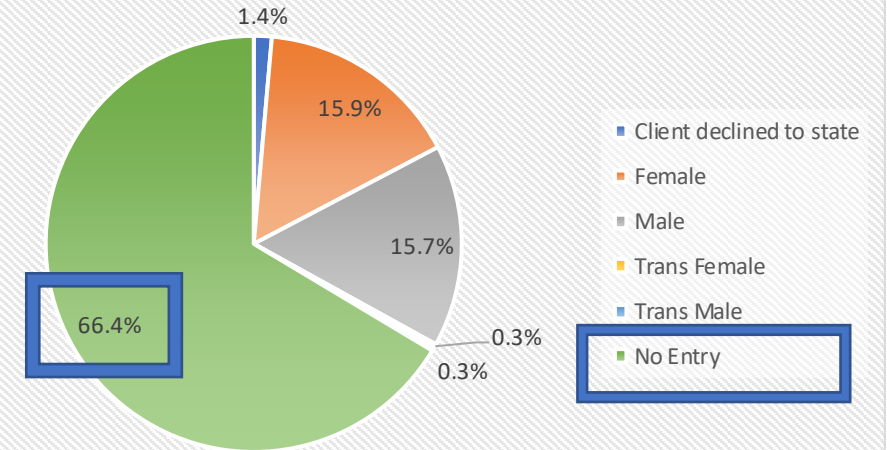


# SOGI Data Collection at CTNB

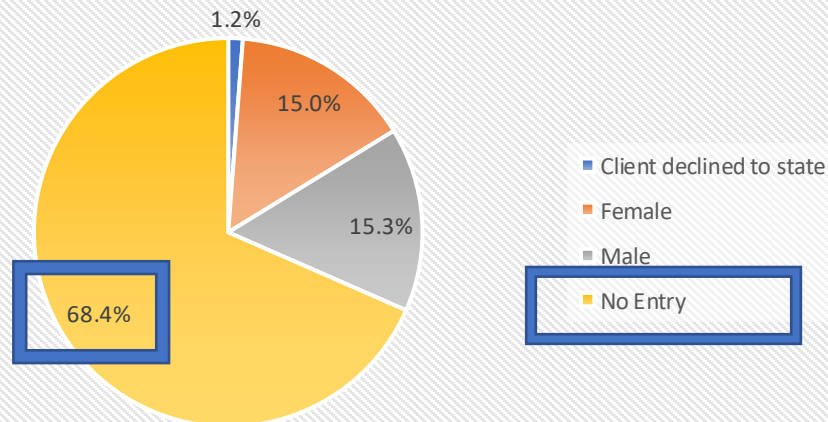
CTNB Client Sexual Orientation (2022)



CTNB Client Gender Identity (2022)



CTNB Client Sex at Birth (2022)



# Focus group results (2021)

- A lot of discomfort collecting SOGI, especially in Asian language.
  - Have not had training in collecting SOGI data
  - Don't know how to formulate questions appropriately/sensitively in Asian languages
  - Increased comfort in English
- Increased discomfort with older patients, especially monolingual
- Sometimes will mark “decline to state” to save hassle
  - Some clinicians spent 30 min explaining SOGI
- SOGI form given at beginning of intake felt clunky, prefer to weave into assessment
- Did not know how to input SOGI data into Avatar



# Identified need: culturally-adapted training in SOGI

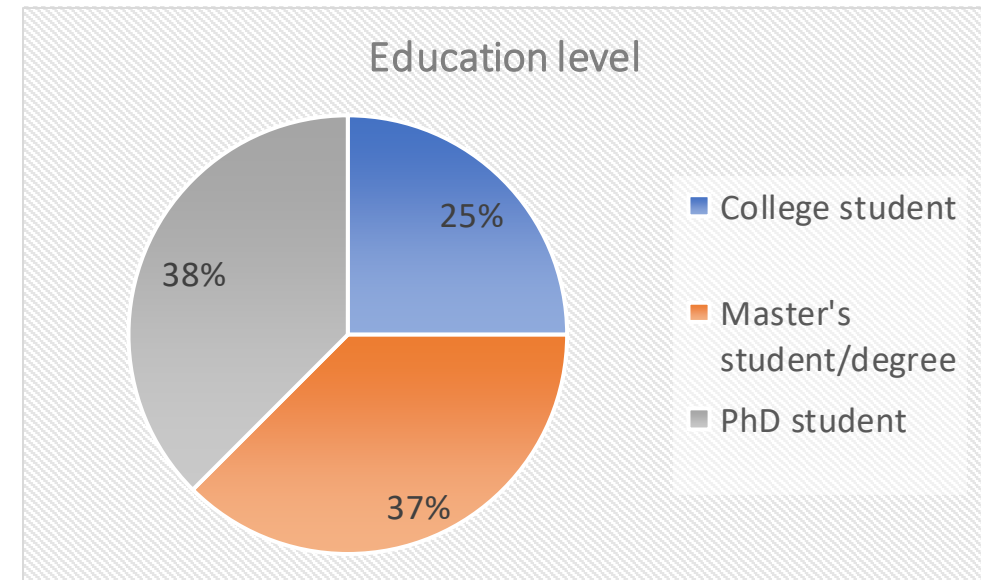
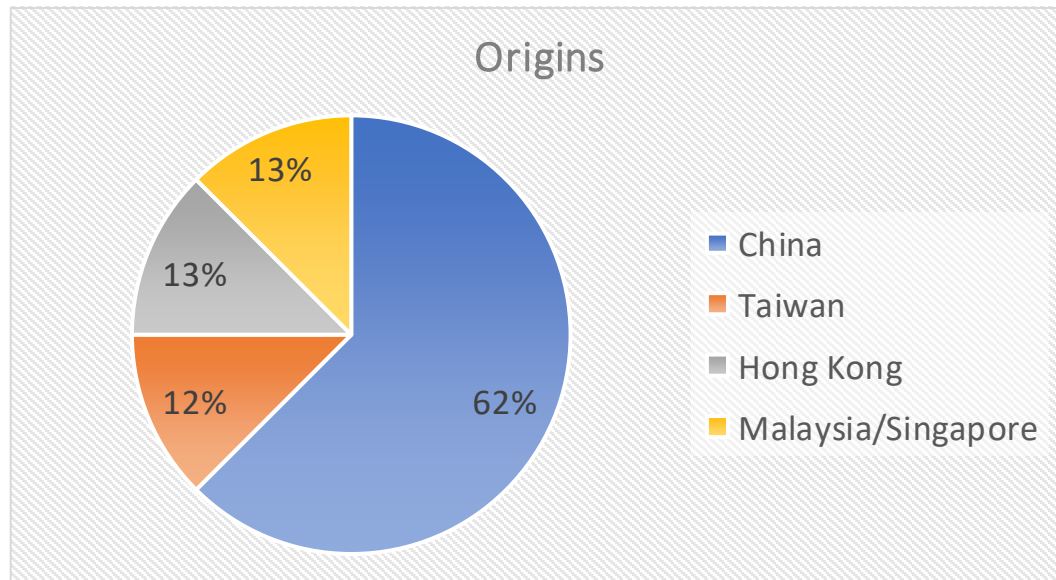
- Literature review: no existing guidelines for asking about SOGI in Chinese (in English or Chinese language)
- PPAF project
- UCSF IRB-approved qualitative study focused on Chinese transgender and nonbinary adults
- Data collection began 8/2022

# Methods

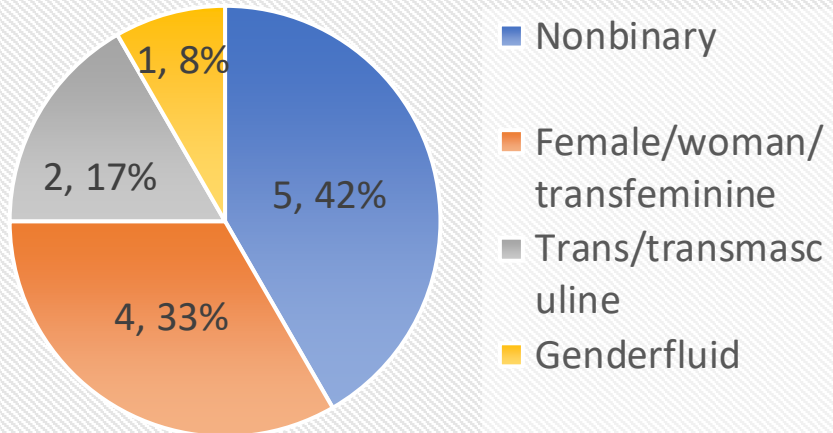
- Eligibility criteria:
  - Chinese ethnicity
  - Identify as transgender, nonbinary, or otherwise not cisgender
  - Fluent in Mandarin Chinese (reading/writing/speaking) and English
  - Age 18+
  - Residing in the US or US citizen residing anywhere
- Recruited from CBOs and social media groups
- Interviews conducted virtually using semi-structured interview guide
  - Average length 90 min (SD 27 min)
- Interviews summarized then double-coded using thematic analysis

# Results - Demographics

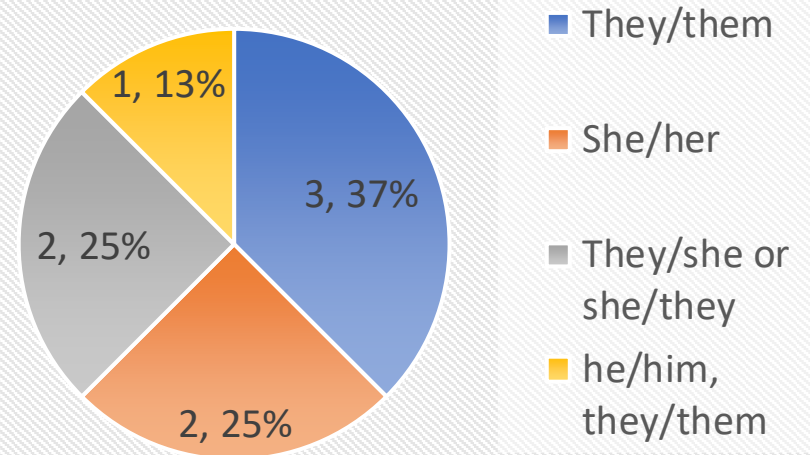
- 8 participants from around the US: California (6), the South (2)
- Age: mean 26.2 (SD 4.6), range 19-32
- Number of years in US: mean 3.8 (SD 3.7), range 0.5-11



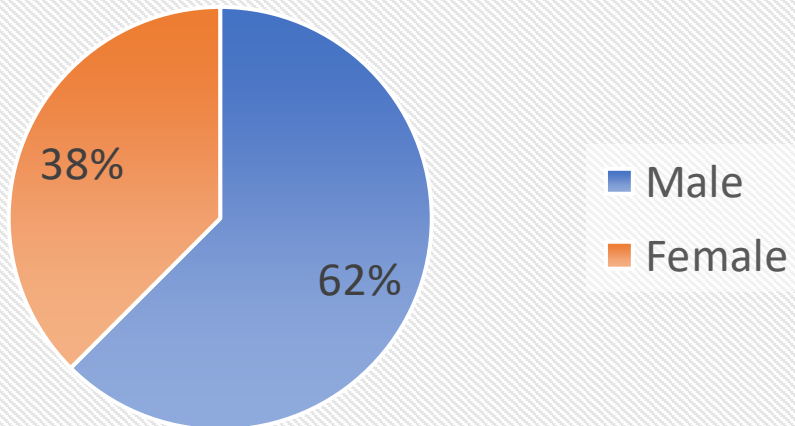
### Gender Identity



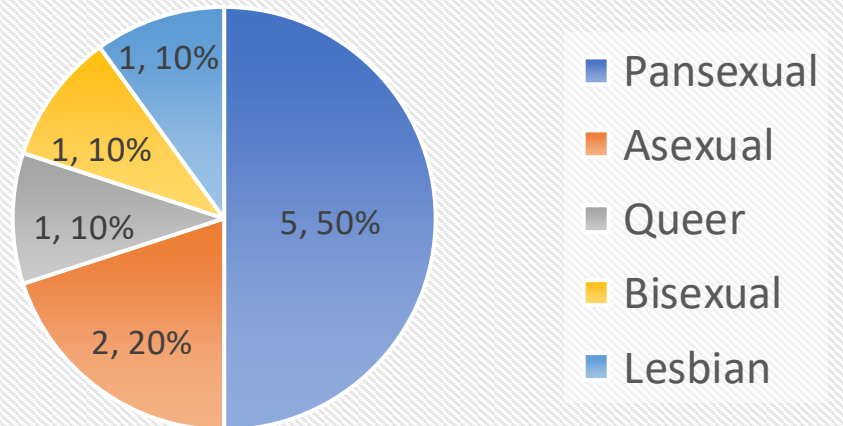
### Pronouns



### Assigned Sex at Birth



### Sexual Orientation



# Results: Themes

- Chinese culture limits discussions around sex/gender
  - Taboo talking about sex/gender
  - Confucianism
  - Binarized views of gender

*“There’s not much discussion about gender and sex in Chinese culture due to 儒家思想 (Rújiā sīxiǎng – Confucianism), which wants you to become a person who benefits society, ruled by tradition. You can’t choose your gender because if you do so, you won’t have offspring/children which is considered bad for society.”*

# Results: Themes

- Lack of terminology to discuss sex/gender
  - Most terms are direct translations from English
  - Difficulty expressing nonbinary, lack of accepted terms

*“Many terms in Chinese are directly translated from English. The terms are created in English, then translated to Chinese. For the general population in China, not many people will know these terms.”*

# Results: Themes

他  
(Tā)

- Pronouns in Chinese
  - Not important in spoken Chinese since they all sound the same
  - Emphasis on asking pronouns in English can feel strange
  - History of pronouns being gender neutral until recent exposure to the West

*“他 (Tā) was historically gender neutral. Only for the past 100 years has it been used as he/him.”*

# Pronouns in Chinese (pronounced tā)

- More common

- 他 (person)
- 她 (female)
- Ta (neutral)
- 佢 (Cantonese)

- Less common

- 祂 (divine)
- x也 (Anglo)
- 它 (it)
- 他们 (they)
- 男也 (male)

他  
(Tā)



# Unique needs of Chinese trans and nonbinary folks

- *“It is important to give Chinese trans people **space and courage to speak up**. Many don’t have the courage to speak up about their gender identity, and don’t seek mental health treatment/therapy because they think of themselves as ‘abnormal’ and want to hide from others. It’s important to see the patient, and **let them know it’s ok to say who they are**.”*
- *“Many cisgender psychiatrists/therapists don’t understand the needs of Chinese trans people, including **fear of information getting leaked to their parents**. There is a ‘strong perspective’ for parents and social pressure. Coming out is not easy. Some therapists don’t understand and say to just come out.”*
- *“Have some **knowledge of Hong Kong [and Taiwan] vs China**, know general history, political stuff, and not assume we are Chinese.”*

# Healthcare Provider Do's and Don'ts

DON'T	DO
Be racist or transphobic	Be anti-racist and LGBTQ+-affirming
Have patients educate you about gender care	Seek education on the basics of gender care
Assume what the patient needs/their priorities; Assume a linear or specific narrative.	Be open and nonjudgmental. Listen to the patient. Have empathy.
Overfocus on gender to the exclusion of other needs; Ask invasive questions not relevant to care	See the patient as a whole. Treat trans people as people first
Gatekeep or introduce barriers to care	Decrease barriers and increase access to care; offer resources
Misgender patients or use language that they are not using (e.g. dead name, honorifics)	Read questionnaires prior to visit and use correct terms (e.g. name and pronouns). Use the patient's terms to address body parts (e.g. chest vs breast)
Carelessly ask about sensitive topics (such as sex assigned at birth)	Take care when asking about sensitive topics. Asking about body parts/organs may be preferred to sex assigned at birth
Say that gender care is elective and can wait	Recognize that gender care is medically necessary
Be ignorant about the political and cultural context of Asian trans people	Understand the cultural and political context, including oppression and censorship of trans people in Asia

# Limitations of the study

- Primarily transitional age youth and young adults (ages 19-32)
- Highly educated (college or grad school)
- Interviews conducted primarily in English, so participants had to be fluent in English
- Missing input from older adults and those with less education
- Small sample size
- Geographic diversity limited, most participants live in CA
- More representation from China

# CTNB Clinic Training

# SOGI Mandarin Training on 2/14/23

- Conducted 1 hr training along with Kai Huang, UCSF MS1
- Participants completed pre-post surveys
  - 20 people completed the pre-survey
  - 16 people completed the post-survey

# Materials

- [SOGI Chinese Toolkit](#)
  - [Presentation slides](#)
  - [SOGI Chinese Written Questionnaire](#)
  - [SOGI Chinese Terms Glossary – Simplified Chinese](#)
  - [SOGI Chinese Terms Glossary – Traditional Chinese](#)
  - [SOGI Chinese Practice Handout](#)
  - [Pronouns in Chinese](#)
  - [Healthcare Provider Do's-Don'ts when caring for Chinese transgender patients](#)
  - [Entering SOGI into Avatar](#)

**What roles did participants have? [pre-training survey]**

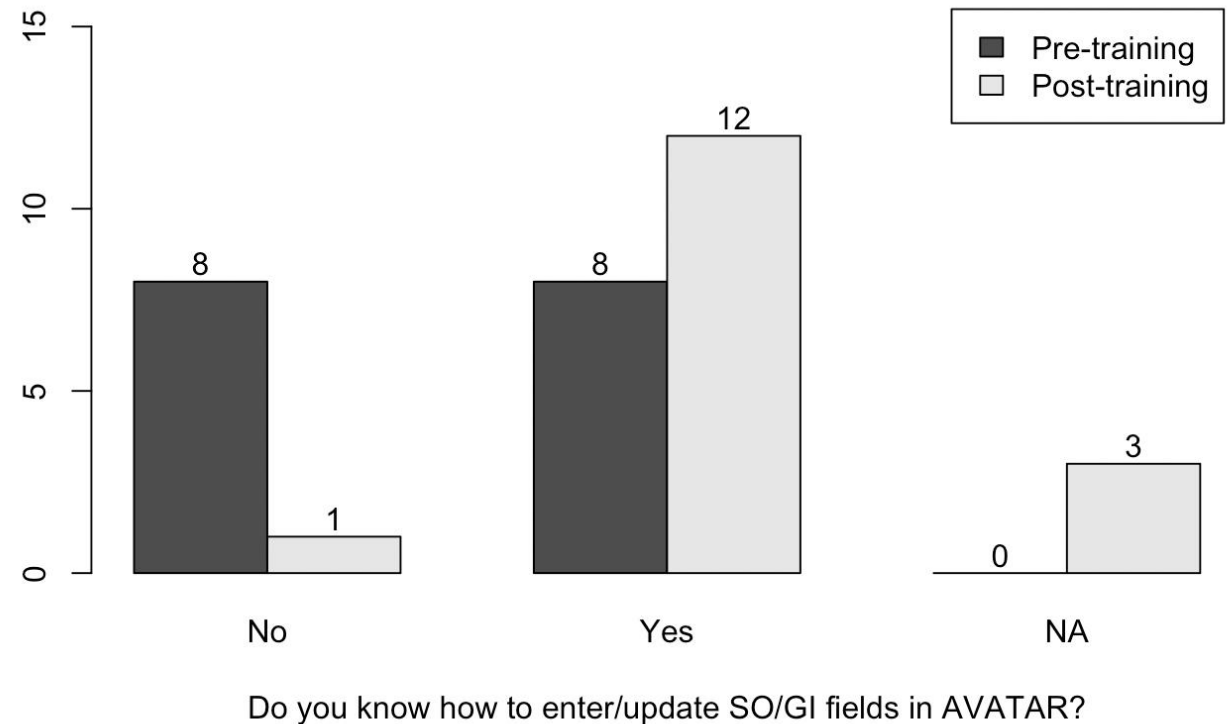
Role	% of responses
Behavioral Health Clinician	35%
Prescriber	25%
Nurse	10%
Other	10%
Pharmacist	10%
Clinical Trainee	5%
Health Worker	5%

**How often did participants discuss SOGI with patients?  
[pre-training survey]**

Discussing SO/GI with patients	% of responses
Never	25%
Occasionally	45%
Only upon intake	25%

## Do participants know how to enter/update SO/GI field in AVATAR?

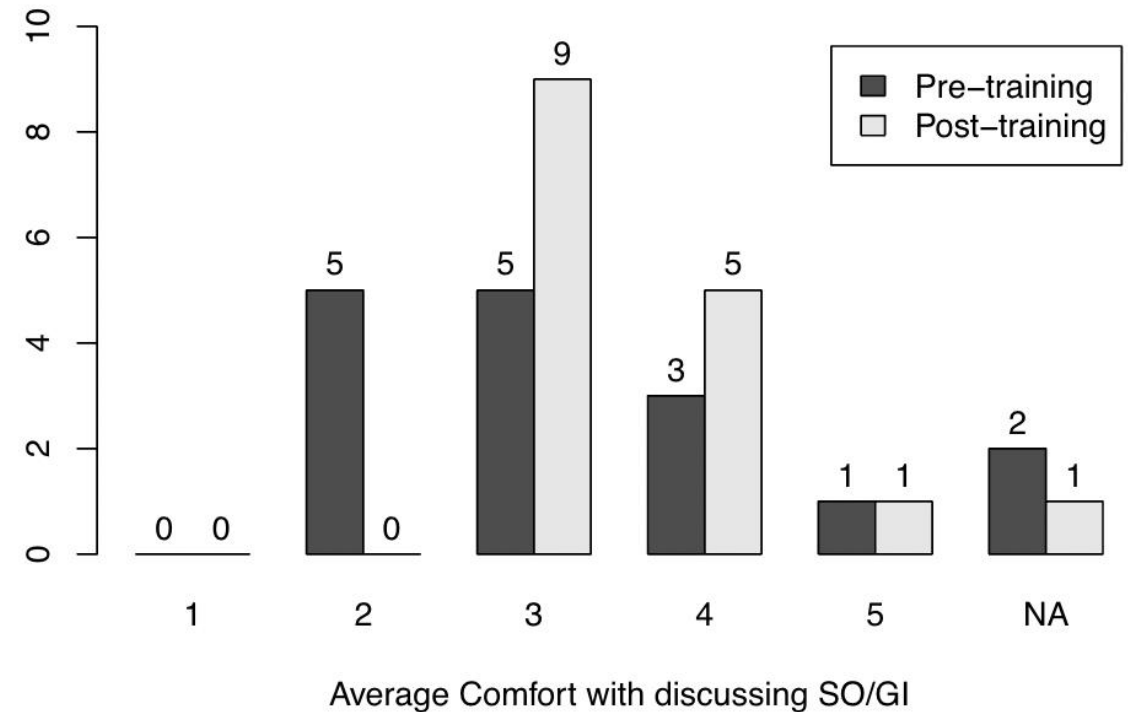
- There is a significant difference in pre and post training knowledge for how to enter/update SO/GI fields in AVATAR.  
(*Chi-square test, p-value = 0.01\**)
- 38% of participants reported improved knowledge of entering SO/GI fields in AVATAR after the training. 44% reported no change.





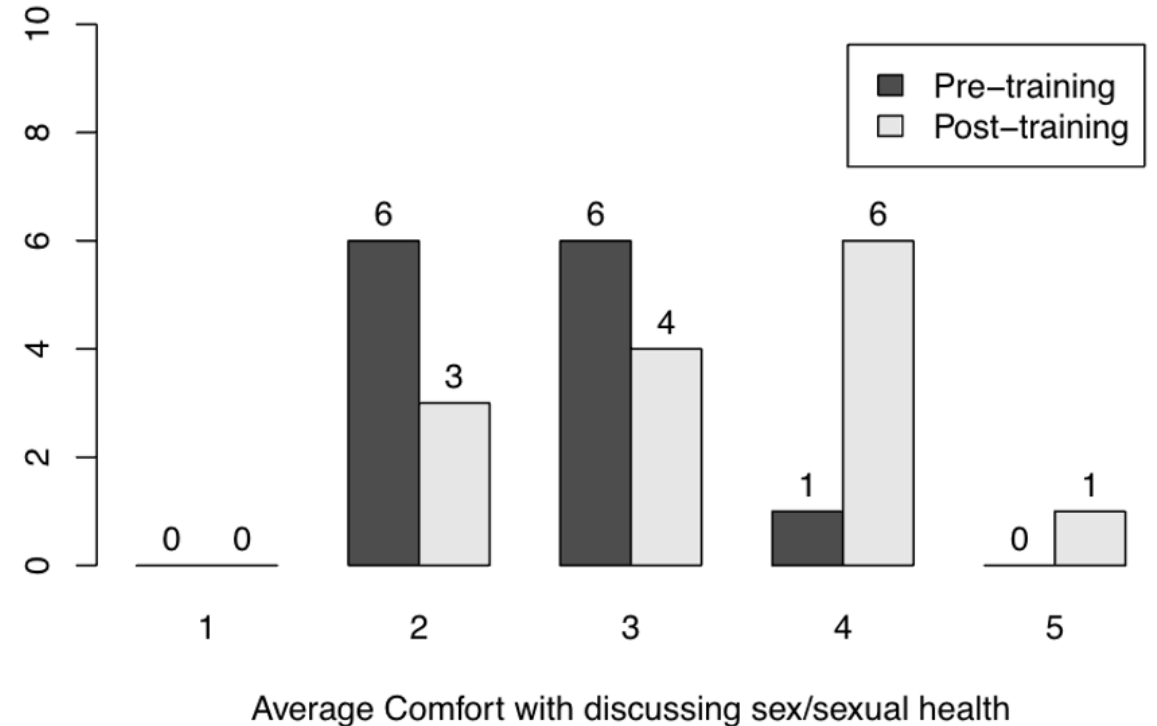
## How comfortable are participants with discussing SO/GI on average?

- There is a significant difference in pre/post training responses for average comfort with discussing SO/GI. (*Mann-Whitney U Test, p-value = 0.02\**)
- 38% of participants reported improved comfort in discussing SO/GI. 50% reported no change.



## How comfortable are participants with discussing sexual health on average?

- There is a significant difference in pre/post training responses for average comfort with discussing sex/sexual health (*Mann-Whitney U Test, p-value = 0.006\**)
- 81% of participants reported improved comfort in discussing sex/sexual health. 31% reported no change.



## What factors contribute to having any data in the GI or SO fields pre-training?

### Significant Differences

Variable	Entry (n=261)		No entry (n=467)		P-value
	Mean (sd)	Range	Mean (sd)	Range	
# of service encounters	7.7 (13.4)	1-105	5.1 (7.2)	1-104	0.0006*
# of different providers seen	2.5 (1.7)	1-9	2.2 (1.4)	1-10	0.0047*
Age (years)	54.1 (14.7)	19-95	57.2 (14.7)	18-95	0.0049*
Education (years)	11.2 (4.3)	0-20	10.0 (4.9)	0-20	0.0039*

\*Based on Mann Whitney U Test,  $p < 0.05$

# Conclusions

- Asking about SOGI is important, though challenging to collect
- It is important to train staff in collecting SOGI data in a culturally and linguistically sensitive way
- A one-time training increased comfort level but did not change rates of SOGI data collection. Need for ongoing support, change in clinic workflows, and practice-based trainings
- Consider providers' own cultural values when developing trainings
- Since SOGI language is constantly changing, it is important to seek feedback and update as appropriate

# Next Steps

- Disseminate SOGI Chinese training and materials to other clinics/agencies that serve Chinese-speaking populations
- Work with Seth Pardo and Equity workgroup to formalize SOGI recommendations and officially adopt as a system
- Develop healthcare toolkit for clinicians working with Chinese trans and nonbinary patients (with Kai Huang, medical student)
- Prepare manuscript(s) for publication
- Improve English SOGI form
- Develop additional culturally- and linguistically-attuned supports/programming for Chinese parents of trans and nonbinary youth

# Acknowledgements

- Johanna Folk, PhD (she/her, they/them)
- Kai J. Huang, BS (they/them, he/him, ze/zir, 他)
- Anya Fang, BA (she/her)
- Priya Dahiya, BA (she/her)
- Rachel Loewy, PhD (she/her)
- Seth Pardo, PhD (he/him)
- Rebecca Hurwitz, BA (she/her)
- Andrea N. Ponce, BA (she/her)
- Andrea Elser, BA (she/her)
- Heather Weisbrod, LCSW (she/her)
- Christina Mangurian, MD, MAS (she/her)
- Yezhe Lin, MD, MSc (any pronouns)
- Hui Sphinx, PhD

# Questions/Feedback

- Contact:
  - A. Ning Zhou: [ning.zhou@sfdph.org](mailto:ning.zhou@sfdph.org)

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