BACKGROUND
The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funds comparative effectiveness research and other projects to enable productive partnerships between researchers, patients and other healthcare community stakeholders. These partnerships are particularly important to ensure that research is relevant and meaningful to patients from vulnerable populations.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals comprise a vulnerable population experiencing unique health and healthcare disparities due to the stigma and discrimination associated with their sexual and gender identity. LGBTQ+ individuals are rarely identified in health services research and remain understudied and underserved.

PCORI has funded a robust portfolio of projects focused on reducing health disparities for the underserved populations shown below.

OBJECTIVES
This portfolio analysis seeks to describe themes within PCORI’s portfolio of projects focused on LGBTQ+ individuals.

STUDY DESIGN
Projects were selected for this analysis if they targeted the LGBTQ+ population for recruitment and/or a subgroup analysis by sexual orientation or gender identity. A qualitative analysis was conducted of PCORI-funded projects that focused on LGBTQ+ populations. Thirty-two projects (completed and on-going) were identified. Projects were mapped to knowledge gaps in the LGBTQ+ peer-reviewed literature and further coded for common themes.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

FINDING 1
PCORI’s Investment in LGBTQ+ Populations
PCORI has invested $42 million in 32 projects focused on LGBTQ+ populations. Of these 32 projects, 14 were Research awards, 17 were Engagement awards, and one was a Patient-Powered Research Network (PPRN) Award.

FINDING 2
Three Overarching Conditions Emerged from the Analysis
An inductive thematic analysis produced three conditions across the 32 PCORI-funded projects. These conditions were based on the overall project goals and/or study aims and were found across the different award types. These projects focused on the following areas: Healthcare Delivery Models, HIV Care, and Mental Health. These are not mutually exclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Research Awards</th>
<th>Engagement Awards</th>
<th>Clinical Research</th>
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<td>Mental Health</td>
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FINDING 3
Common Themes across LGBTQ+ Projects
Of the 32 projects, 15 focus on establishing working groups representing LGBTQ+ individuals to help identify the most important health and healthcare concerns of this population and to help promote LGBTQ+ health research; eight focus on models of appropriate mental health treatments, as LGBTQ+ individuals are at higher risk of experiencing mental health conditions; four focus on provider training for culturally competent care for LGBTQ+ individuals, specifically how to appropriately ask about sexual orientation and gender identity in a patient-centered way; and five focus on considerations of care and healthcare needs of transgender individuals, especially those who have had gender affirmation surgery.

CONCLUSION
This analysis demonstrates that most of PCORI’s financial investment in LGBTQ+ populations is funded through Research ($37M, 14 awards), but more small projects ($5M) are funded through Engagement and focused on building research capacity, which shows PCORI’s range of support for LGBTQ+ patient-centered research. The Engagement awards included efforts to bring community partners together and generate ideas that are important to the LGBTQ+ individuals. However, despite recent advancements in LGBTQ+ research particularly in the field of HIV/AIDS, research on individual subpopulations and other health conditions is still limited.

The most recent literature published highlights (1) greater need for data collection and (2) greater consideration for intersectionality and health disparities. PCORI has a growing portfolio in LGBTQ+ health that will generate evidence to inform healthcare decision-making from patient, provider, and health systems perspective. However, further investment is needed to generate evidence and reduce disparities in this population.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE
Evidence produced from this portfolio to date demonstrates how patient-centered research that seeks to reduce disparities and improve health outcomes requires active engagement of LGBTQ+ individuals in healthcare infrastructure and research, congruent and culturally competent care approaches, and reliable data collection of this under-researched vulnerable population. This will enrich scientific understanding of how sexual orientation and gender identity relate to health and health risks, perceptions and expectations about health, health behaviors, and barriers and access to health-related services.

REFERENCES
4. “Comparing Clinician-Interested and Self-Collected Tests for Detecting Risk HPV Infection among Female-to-Male Transgender Adults” (Principal Investigator: Sari Reisner, ScD)
5. “Exploring the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute’s Investment in LGBTQ+ Populations” (Principal Investigator: Brendan Weintraub, MPH, CHES®; Soknontha Prum, MPH; Mari Kimura, PhD; Cathy Gurgol, MS)

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