



WPATH 2011

Gender Dysphoria

Section III, V, VI, and VII (most relevant)

Gender Nonconformity vs Gender Dysphoria

- Stigma in many societies
 - Prejudice, discrimination → **minority stress**
 - More vulnerable to developing mental health concerns
 - Abuse + neglect in relationships
- Gender nonconformity
 - Extent to which one's gender identity, role or expression differs from cultural norms (prescribed for that particular sex)
- Gender dysphoria
 - Discomfort or distress caused by discrepancy
 - Between gender identity vs assigned sex at birth
 - Only some gender nonconforming people experience gender dysphoria
- Treatment → aim to alleviate distress
 - Psychosocial
 - Hormone therapy
 - Surgery



Advancements in Knowledge & Treatment

- Sex reassignment (hormone/surgery)
 - Highly effective
 - High satisfaction rates
 - Extremely rare regrets
 - Medically necessary for many
 - Some may need both, or just one
 - Psychotherapy helps



Options for Psychological & Medical Treatment

- Treatment options for Gender Dysphoria
 - Changes in gender expression & role
 - Hormone therapy
 - Surgery
 - Psychotherapy
- Options for support changes in gender *expression*
 - Peer supports
 - Family/friend supports
 - Voice + communication therapy
 - Hair removal
 - Breast binding/padding
 - Genital tucking/penile prostheses
 - Padding of hips/buttocks
 - Changes in name + gender marker on ID



Phenomenology in Children

- Childhood

- Lower rates of persistence into adult → 6-23%
- Boys more likely to identify as gay in adulthood (vs transgender)
- Males 3-6x higher

- Adolescents

- More likely to persistent into adulthood (no studies...)
- Gender ratio equal
- More likely to have co-existing MH disorders:
 - Anxiety, depression
 - ODD
 - ASD



Physical Interventions for Adolescents (and older)

3 stages

1. **Fully reversible** – delay physical changes of puberty

- Eligible once puberty has begun (usually Tanner stage 2)
- **GnRH analogs** → suppress estrogen or testosterone production
 - i.e. goserelin, buserelin, triptorelin
- **Anti-androgens: Medroxyprogesterone, spironolactone** → inhibits T secretion and binding to androgen receptor
- Continuous **OCP** → suppress menses

2. **Partially reversible** - hormone therapy (masculinize or feminize)

- Testosterone and androgenic steroids may increase risk of **hypomania, mania or psychosis** in patients with underlying psychiatric disorders

3. **Irreversible** – genital surgical procedures

- When patients reach legal age of majority AND have lived continuously (at least 12 months) in the gender role
- Chest surgery can be carried out earlier (preferably after 1+ year of testosterone)
- *When patients with GD are also dx with a **severe psychiatric disorder and impaired reality testing**, an effort must be made to **improve these conditions** (meds/therapy) before surgery is contemplated*



Tasks Related to Assessment and Referral

1. **Assess** gender dysphoria
2. Provide information re: **options** for gender identity and expression, and possible medical interventions
3. Assess, dx, and discuss tx options for **coexisting MH concerns**
 - Should be optimally managed prior to, or concurrent with, treatment of gender dysphoria
 - Patients may benefit from psychotropic medications
4. Assess eligibility, prepare and refer for hormone therapy or surgery
 - Explore reproductive options **before** hormone tx
 - HCP who recommend hormone tx or surgery **share ethical and legal responsibility** for that decision with the MD who provides the service



Tasks Related to Psychotherapy

1. Psychotherapy **not** an absolute requirement for hormone tx or surgery (*though highly recommended*)
2. Goals of therapy for adults with gender concerns
 - Help to achieve comfort in gender identity expression, with realistic chances for success in relationships, education and work
3. Psychotherapy for trans and gender nonconforming patients, including counselling and support for changes in gender role
4. Family therapy or support for family members
5. Follow-up care throughout life
6. E-therapy, online counseling or distance counselling

