ECHO Idaho: Behavioral Health in Primary Care

Gender Dysphoria
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Tara Whitaker, MD
St. Luke’s Capital City Family Medicine

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Learning Objectives

• Review concept of gender identity
• Define Gender Dysphoria
• Resources for treatment
Gender identity

The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pen and Anna Moore
Gender dysphoria—DSM-5

- Diagnostic Criteria for Gender Dysphoria (in Adolescents or Adults)
  - A. A marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least 6 months duration, as manifested by at least two of the following:
    - 1. a marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics (or, in young adolescents, the anticipated secondary sex characteristics)
    - 2. a strong desire to be rid of one’s primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one’s experienced/expressed gender (or, in young adolescents, a desire to prevent the development of the anticipated secondary sex characteristics)
    - 3. a strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender
    - 4. a strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one’s assigned gender)
    - 5. a strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one’s assigned gender)
    - 6. a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one’s assigned gender)
  - B. The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
In office recommendations

- Simple in office interventions
  - Gender neutral bathrooms (at least one)
  - Change gender designation on intake from “male/female” to gender__________ or offer a “transgender” and “other” option
  - Use gender neutral language and ask about preferred pronouns, names
  - Be kind, courteous and open, it goes a long way...
Sample intake form

1. What is your current gender identity? (Check and/or circle ALL that apply)
   - Male
   - Female
   - Transgender Male/Transman/FTM
   - Transgender Female/Transwoman/MTF
   - Genderqueer
   - Additional category (please specify): ________________________________
   - Decline to answer

2. What sex were you assigned at birth? (Check one)
   - Male
   - Female
   - Decline to answer

3. What pronouns do you prefer?_______________________

(UCSF Center for Excellence in Transgender Health, Transhealth.ucsf.edu)
Options for psychological and medical treatment

• Number of treatments applied and order varies
  – Changes in gender expression and role (living in role consistent with identity)
  – Psychotherapy to explore gender identity, role, expression, mental health, enhancing social support, eliminating internalized transphobia etc.
  – Hormone therapy to feminize or masculinize
  – Surgery to change primary and/or secondary sex characteristics
Options for social support and changes in gender expression

- **Support groups**: In person and online
- **Support resources for family and friends**
- **Voice and communication therapy**: verbal and nonverbal skills
- **Hair removal**: laser, electrolysis, waxing
- **Devices**: Breast binding or padding, genital tucking, penile prostheses, padding of hips or buttocks
- **Identity documents**: Changes in name and gender marker
Hormone therapy—clinical practice guidelines

- Some TG patients decide not to pursue
- Many guidelines for treatment available
  - Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming People (SOC 7)—World Professional Association of Transgender Health-WPATH
  - Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline
  - UCSF Center for Excellence in Transgender Health, Primary Care Protocol
Informed consent

• Mental health provider involvement, continued consultation
• Some permanent effects so generally felt to be “irreversible”
• Reproductive effects
• Need continuous/ongoing monitoring
Hormone therapy

• MTF:
  – Testosterone blocker (spironolactone, finasteride)
  – Estradiol (injectable, pill or patch)

• FTM
  – Testosterone (Patch, Injectable, gel)
Risks/side effects to watch for MTF

- Venous thromboembolic disease
  - Over 40 more susceptible, also sedentary, obese or with underlying thrombophilia
  - Addition of progestin increases risk
  - Transdermal more risky
- CV events, especially over 50
- Lipid disorders
  - High triglycerides—pancreatitis, CV events
- Transient transaminitis
- Cholelithiasis
- Hyperkalemia (spironolactone effect)
- Type 2 DM
- HTN
- Prolactinoma
- Breast cancer: MTF who have take hormones do get breast cancer, but rates are unknown in comparison to those born with female genitalia
  - RFs include family history, longer duration of exposure to estrogen, obesity, use of progestins
Risks/side effects to watch-FTM

- Likely risks:
  - Polycythemia (HcT >50%)
  - Modest weight gain
- Possible increased risk
  - Dyslipidemia
  - Transaminitis
  - Risk of mania, hypomania and psychotic symptoms in patients with underlying psych illness
- Inconclusive
  - Osteoporosis
  - CV events-if known risk factors
  - Increase in BP—but not HTN
  - T2DM-if known risk factors
  - Ovarian cancer
  - Endometrial cancer
- Fertility reduction, but not completely.....
Selected References


• Thornhill L. and Klein P. Creating Environments of Care with Transgender Communities. JANAC. 2010. 21(3) 230-239.

• University of California, San Francisco Center of Excellence for Transgender Health. Primary Care Protocol for Transgender patient care. [http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/protocols](http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/protocols).


Definitions/terminology

- **Sex/assigned sex/birth sex/biological sex**
  - Male, female or intersex
  - Determined at *birth*
  - *Someone else decides this for you*
- **Intersex**
  - Ambiguous genitalia, sex chromosomes or gonads
- **Gender**
  - Qualitative experience
  - Woman, man, masculine, feminine, butch, femme, transgender, trans, genderqueer, cisgender
  - Fluid
  - *Only you can define your gender*
More terms

• Transgender/trans
  – Umbrella term
  – Gender not completely aligned with birth sex

• Transsexual
  – Older term
  – Some medical use still, though controversial

• MTF, M2F, Male-to-female, Trans woman
  – Feminine pronouns generally

• FTM, F2M, Female-to-male, Trans man
  – Masculine pronouns generally
Yep, even more

• Cis-gender
  – Those whose birth sex aligns with their gender

• Genderqueer
  – Describes someone who does not conform to traditional gender roles

• Transition
  – Mental, emotional, physical process of changing one’s gender presentation
  – Can involve changes in dress, hair, make-up, hormones, surgical procedures or none of the above