Gender Affirmation Surgeries in the Pediatric Setting – Issues & Controversies

Oren Ganor, MD
Boston Children’s Hospital
September 23rd, 2018
## Experiences of people who were out as transgender in K–12 or believed classmates, teachers, or school staff thought they were transgender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCES</th>
<th>% OF THOSE WHO WERE OUT OR PERCEIVED AS TRANSGENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbally harassed because people thought they were transgender</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed to dress in a way that fit their gender identity or expression</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplined for fighting back against bullies</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically attacked because people thought they were transgender</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe they were disciplined more harshly because teachers or staff thought they were transgender</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left a school because the mistreatment was so bad</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually assaulted because people thought they were transgender</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expelled from school</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One or more experiences listed</strong></td>
<td><strong>77%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age began to feel gender incongruence

Age started to think they were transgender
Distribution by age

- Crossdressers: 18 to 24 (8%), 25 to 44 (20%), 45 to 64 (43%), 65 and over (29%)
- Non-binary: 18 to 24 (4%), 25 to 44 (35%), 45 to 64 (61%), 65 and over (1%)
- Trans men: 18 to 24 (9%), 25 to 44 (47%), 45 to 64 (43%), 65 and over (<1%)
- Trans women: 18 to 24 (24%), 25 to 44 (26%), 45 to 64 (46%), 65 and over (5%)

Each group = 100%
Age began transitioning by GENDER IDENTITY (%)
Center for Gender Surgery

- Plastic Surgery
- Admin Support
- Social Work
- Urology
- Nursing

Patient
Interest in Transition - Overall

**Counseling for Transition:**
- 75%

**Hormone Therapy:**
- 95% of transgenders
- 49% of non-binary

---

Types of Gender Affirming Surgery

- **Top Surgery**
  - Transmasculine chest reconstruction
  - Breast augmentation

- **Bottom Surgery**
  - Vaginoplasty
  - Phalloplasty
  - Metoidioplasty

- **Other Surgeries**
  - Hysterectomy & BSO
  - Orchiectomy

- **Other Services**
  - Facial feminization surgery
  - Tracheal shave
  - Vocal cords surgery
  - Speech therapy
  - Hair removal
  - Fertility preservation
Age Distribution for the Transgender-Identified Population

Data & Figure from Herman et al. 2017. Age of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender in the United States. The Williams Institute.
Percentage of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender by Age

- 13 to 17: 0.7%
- 18 to 24: 0.7%
- 25 to 64: 0.6%
- 65 and older: 0.5%
- All Adults (18+): 0.6%
Estimated Number of transgender Youth (13 to 17)
New England Transgender Population – By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>New England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-17 year olds who identify as</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>4,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transgender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 year olds who identify as</td>
<td>4,550</td>
<td>8,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transgender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-65 year olds who identify as</td>
<td>20,150</td>
<td>40,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transgender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New England: MA, ME, NH, VT, RI, CT
# Transmasculine Surgeries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chest reconstruction – 97%[^4]</td>
<td>2,207</td>
<td>4,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metoidioplasty[^4]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 27% interested</td>
<td>614 – 1,729</td>
<td>1,175 – 3,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 49% not certain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalloplasty[^4]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 22% interested</td>
<td>500 – 1,479</td>
<td>957 – 2,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 43% not certain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

[^1]: 2016 Williams Institute Study
[^2]: Assumption: 50% of total trans population is transmale, 50% is transfemale
Transmasculine Surgeries

1. 2016 Williams Institute Study
2. Assumption: 50% of total trans population is transmale, 50% is transfemale

---

**Bar Chart:**

- Chest surgery reduction or reconstruction: 36% Have had it, 61% Want it some day, 3% Not sure if they want this, 1% Do not want this
- Hysterectomy: 14% Have had it, 57% Want it some day, 23% Not sure if they want this, 6% Do not want this
- Metoidioplasty: 2% Have had it, 25% Want it some day, 49% Not sure if they want this, 24% Do not want this
- Phalloplasty: 3% Have had it, 19% Want it some day, 43% Not sure if they want this, 35% Do not want this
- Other procedure not listed: 6% Have had it, 13% Want it some day, 19% Not sure if they want this, 62% Do not want this
# Transfeminine Surgeries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Massachusetts¹</th>
<th>New England¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 transwomen</td>
<td>2,275²</td>
<td>4,350²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast augmentation</td>
<td>1,160 – 1,843</td>
<td>2,219 – 3,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 51% interested³</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 30% not certain³</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginoplasty³</td>
<td>1,502 – 2,002</td>
<td>2,871 – 3,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 66% interested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 22% not certain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Assumption: 50% of total trans population is transmale, 50% is transfemale


### Transfeminine Surgeries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Have had it</th>
<th>Want it some day</th>
<th>Not sure if they want this</th>
<th>Do not want this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hair removal or electrolysis</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice therapy (non-surgical)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginoplasty or labiaplasty</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmentation mammoplasty</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchietomy</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial feminization surgery</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracheal shave</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silicone injections</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice surgery</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other procedure not listed</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 2016 Williams Institute Study
2. Assumption: 50% of total trans population is transmale, 50% is transfemale
Eligibility for Gender Affirming Surgeries

Top Surgery

- Age
  - >15 (minors need parental consent)
- Hormones
  - Recommendation of 12 month of hormone treatment
  - No hormone requirement for chest reconstruction
- Letters
  - PCP letter stating “persistent, well documented, gender dysphoria”
  - Mental health provider stating the patient has the capacity to consent
  - any significant medical or mental health issues are being addressed.
Eligibility for Gender Affirming Surgeries

Reconstructive Genital Surgery

- Age > 17/18
- Plus:
  - Another therapist letter
  - the patient’s regular therapist must also state that they have been living, full time, in their identified gender for at least 12 months.
Referral Letters for Surgery

**Where** to get the letters and **what** they need to include:

For **stable patients** with no BH or medical concerns
- Center can provide sample letters spelling out basic requirements

For **Medically** or **Behaviorally Complex** Patients letters should address:
- Safety (BH and Medical)
- Recommended testing
- Why complexity does not affect the appropriateness of the patient for surgery

**Why**
- Appropriateness for surgery
- Prior authorization
Legal & Ethics - Questions of Patient Age

- Age restrictions: procedure based
  - Minimum age:
    - Chest Reconstruction – 15
    - Phalloplasty – 18
    - Vaginoplasty – TBD
  - Maximum age – institution’s policy

- Legal considerations
  - Informed consent for all procedures
  - For minors: two parents consent alongside patient assent.
    - There will be a formal procedure for requesting exceptions to this policy in cases where two parent consent is not appropriate. This procedure is still under development
Legal & Ethics Concerns Specific to Pediatric Populations

- Two parent consent model
- Parents consent to a procedure that results in sterilization
  - Sterilization is a foreseeable outcome of genital affirmation surgeries
  - MA Law is unclear on whether parents can consent to procedures that result in sterilization
  - Parents are restricted from consenting to sterilization procedures for minors
- Are patients mature enough to make decisions about permanent alterations to their body?
  - Requirement for independent evaluation
  - Multi-disciplinary team explicitly assesses:
    - Fertility interest and expectations
      - Referrals for gamete preservation, prn
    - Plans for post-surgical care
    - Support for patients during the peri-operative and post-operative period.
- Body dysmorphia
Research

- Outcomes of gender affirming surgeries – longitudinal study
- Non-binary individuals seeking gender affirmation surgery
- How access to gender affirming surgeries affects access to college/educational opportunities
- Fertility intentions of trans youth seeking gender affirmation
- Evaluating various guidelines around transgender care
  - Discontinuation of hormones
  - Age of patients
  - Documentation requirements
Complicated Family Structure

- Adoption
  - Trauma
  - Complicated psychiatric history
- Divorce/Custody
- Estranged from one or more custodial parents
- Emancipated Minors
- Providers are mandated reporters

Two parental consent policy
Surgical Concerns

- Patients are still growing
- Cross-Sex Hormones for masculine chest reconstruction
- Puberty blockers and Vaginoplasty
- Need to wait for surgery due to age
- Illicit drug use and parental disclosure
- Smoking
- Living with smokers
- Weight
- Difficulty exercising due to chest dysphoria
- Patient are teenagers
Education and Training

- Front Desk Staff
- Peri-operative staff
- EHR issues
- Inpatient units
- Multiple locations
- Net-Learning Module
Thank you