

The Impact of Gender Affirming Surgery: Mental Health Outcomes

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More than half of transgender male adolescents attempt suicide, study says

-Washington Post, September 2018



*VA Undecided on whether to pay for sex
reassignment surgery* -September 2018



Objectives



1. Understand mental health disparities that affect gender minority patients.
2. Identify mental health outcomes following gender affirming surgery.

Terminology 101



Transgender



Trans*



Gender Minority



Gender minority identities



Transfemale

Transmale

Transgender female

Transgender male

MTF

FTM

Woman-ness



Man-ness

Gender minority identities



Transfemale

Transmale

Transgender female

Transgender male

MTF

FTM

Transfeminine

Transmasculine

Woman-ness



Man-ness

Gender minority identities



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MTF

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Transfeminine

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Man-ness

Gender non-binary

Gender non-conforming

Genderqueer

What is a transition?



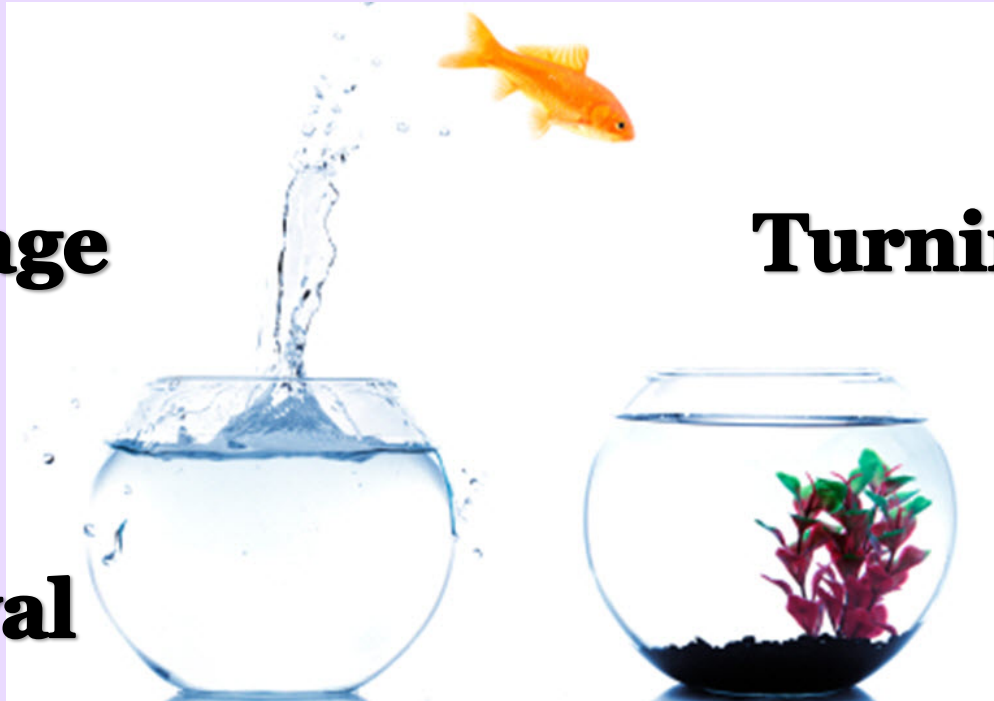
Evolution

Growth

Passage

Turning point

Upheaval



Progress

Realignment

Feminizing gender affirming surgeries



- “Top surgery” (breast augmentation)
- “Bottom surgery”
 - Orchiectomy
 - Vaginoplasty/clitoroplasty
- Facial feminization surgery (FFS)

Masculinizing gender affirming surgeries



- “Top surgery” (mastectomy)
- “Bottom surgery”
 - Hysterectomy
 - Salpingo-oophorectomy
 - Metoidioplasty
 - Phalloplasty

What is a transition?

- 1) Social transition
- 2) Hormone therapy
- 3) Gender affirming surgery



$1 + 2 + 3 \neq$ “complete” transition

Gender Minority Mental Health Disparities



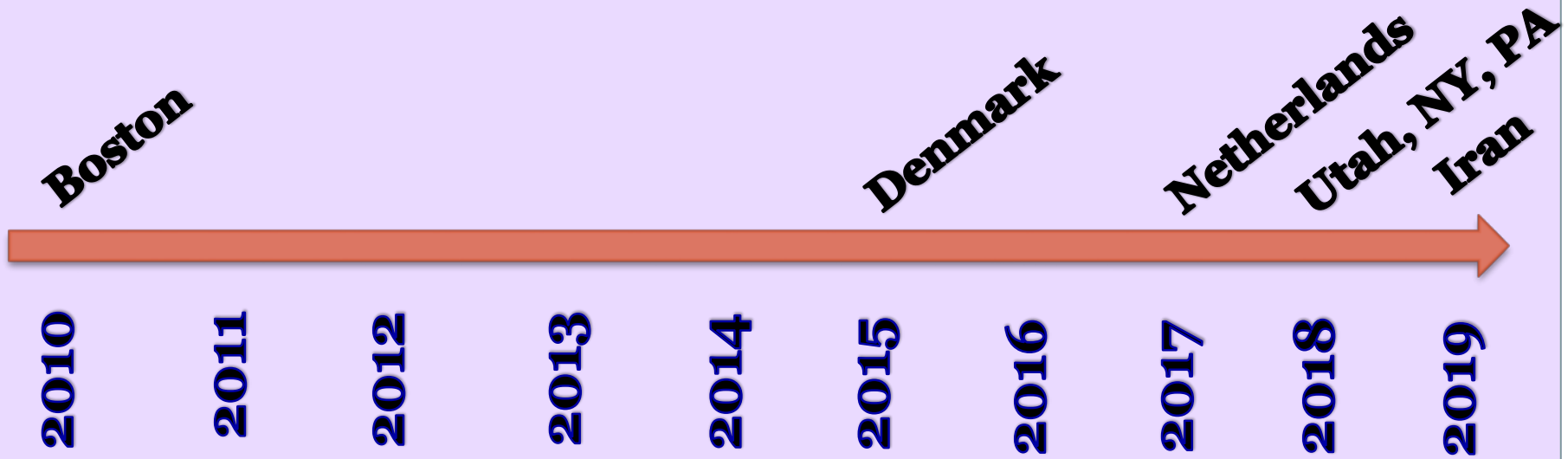
- Rates of depression: 51% MTF and 48% FTM
- Rates of anxiety: 40% MTF and 48% FTM
- National Center for Transgender Equality's US Transgender Survey: *40% of transgender adults have attempted suicide in their lifetime*
 - Transgender adults living in states with more LGBTQ-affirming environments are less likely to have attempted suicide

Gender Minority Youth



- Transgender youth are four times as likely to experience depression
- 40% of transgender youth felt depressed during the previous 30 days
 - 12% in non-LGBTQ youth

Studies looking at mental health impact of GAS



Quality of life of individuals with and without facial feminization surgery or gender reassignment surgery



- **Boston (2010)**
- **247 MTF participants surveyed**
 - FFS outcomes evaluation survey
 - SF-36v2 quality of life survey
- **Results:**
 - Mental health-related QOL was significantly diminished in those without surgery compared to those with any GAS

Long-term follow-up of individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery: psychiatric morbidity and mortality



- **Denmark (2015)**
 - Evaluated period of 1978-2010
- **56 MTF and 48 MTF who had “sex reassignment surgery (SRS)”**
- **Results:**
 - 28% with psychiatric morbidity pre-SRS
 - 22% with psychiatric morbidity post-SRS
 - 6.7% with psychiatric morbidity pre- and post-SRS

Surgical Satisfaction, Quality of Life, and Their Association After Gender-Affirming Surgery: A Follow-up Study



- Netherlands (2017)
- 136 people who underwent GAS
- Results:
 - Those satisfied with surgery had QOL scores similar to reference values
 - Those dissatisfied with surgery had lower QOL scores

Quality of life improvement after chest wall masculinization in female-to-male transgender patients: A prospective study using the BREAST-Q and Body Uneasiness Test



- Utah (2018)
- 42 FTM patients surveyed
- Results:
 - BREAST-Q → significant improvements in domains of breast satisfaction, psychosocial well-being, sexual satisfaction, and physical well-being
 - BUT-A → significant improvement in body image, avoidance, compulsive self-monitoring, and depersonalization
 - ✦ Those with mental health conditions had worse initial scores but greater degree of post-op improvement

Assessing Quality of Life and Patient-Reported Satisfaction with Masculinizing Top Surgery: A Mixed-Methods Descriptive Survey Study



- **New York (2018)**
- **58 FTM/GNB patients who had bilateral mastectomy**
- **Results:**
 - Measures of QOL and sexual confidence improved significantly
 - 86% reported improvement in gender dysphoria-related mental health outcomes

Social Anxiety Among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals: The Role of Gender-Affirming Medical Interventions



- Philadelphia (2018)
- 715 trans* and GNC participants
- Results:
 - Those who completed a GAMI reported low social anxiety than those who were planning/considering that GAMI
 - Generally, those with no interest in a GAMI also had lower social anxiety (seen in transfeminine patients more than transmasculine)

Quality of Life Changes in Iranian Patients Undergoing Female-to-Male Transsexual Surgery: A Prospective Study



- Iran (2019)
- 42 FTM patients undergoing GAS
- Results:
 - Total mean score QOL significantly improved in all domains six months after surgery (26→37)
 - ✦ Mental health domain 21→40

Population	Outcome	Measure	Additional takeaway
MTF	positive	Mental health QOL	
MTF/FTM	?	Psychiatric morbidity	
MTF/FTM	positive	QOL	Surgical satisfaction matters
FTM	positive	Psychosocial wellbeing	Even greater impact if pre-existing mental health d/o
FTM/GNB	positive	Mental health QOL	
MTF/FTM	positive	Social anxiety	Interest in surgery can matter
FTM	positive	QOL	

Takeaways



- 1) Gender minority patients are disproportionately affected by depression, anxiety, and suicide
- 2) The limited studies that do exist show that gender affirming surgeries may be correlated with positive mental health outcomes
- 3) More evidence is needed that looks at big scale long term effects in this evolving field of medicine

For further information



- **World Professional Association for Transgender Health WPATH**
- **USCF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health**
- **Fenway Health**
- **Annual Swedish LGBTQ+ CME**
- **Gender Odyssey**
- **GLMA**
- **Ingersoll Provider Network**

Thank you!



- Questions?

Resources



- Quality of life of individuals with and without facial feminization surgery or gender reassignment surgery (2010)
- Long-term follow-up of individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery: psychiatric morbidity and mortality (2015)
- Surgical Satisfaction, Quality of Life, and Their Association After Gender-Affirming Surgery: A Follow-up Study (2017)
- Quality of life improvement after chest wall masculinization in female-to-male transgender patients: A prospective study using the BREAST-Q and Body Uneasiness Test (2018)
- Assessing Quality of Life and Patient-Reported Satisfaction with Masculinizing Top Surgery: A Mixed-Methods Descriptive Survey Study (2018)
- Social Anxiety Among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals: The Role of Gender-Affirming Medical Interventions (2018)
- Quality of Life Changes in Iranian Patients Undergoing Female-to-Male Transsexual Surgery: A Prospective Study (2019)