

LGBTQ Health

And the Emergency Department
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Objectives

- to understand the principles of LGBTQ health in the Emergency setting
- Clinical decision making with LGBTQ patients in the ER

Definitions

- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Transfemale
- Transmale
- Queer
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Cisgender

Registration

- Gender identity may not match identification on health card
- providers should be aware and ask patients their preferred name and pronoun

Interview

- Use non binary terms where possible
- Do not assume words such as husband/wife/sexual preference
- Learn to be comfortable taking a sexual history
- If you don't ask you won't get the right answer

Exam

- Be respectful
- If its not relevant to the presenting complaint you don't need to ask
- transgender patients are not there for your curiosity about transgender people

Pertinent Risks

- STI risk is based on behaviour not on sexuality or identity
- Higher risk as it pertains to drug/smoking risk
- Suicide risk is higher up to 45% in transgender populations
- VTE risk with estrogen is about 1% and should be a concern with leg swelling, headache or chest pain

Does it matter?

- Yes
- Annals of Emergency Medicine, 2014
- 21% avoided using the ER completely due to perceived negative experience
- 52% reported a negative experience based on their transgender identity in the ER

Canada 2017

- In Canada all Territories and Provinces recognize gender identity and expression as a protected human right
- In 2017, Bill C-16 became law guaranteeing gender identity and expression as protected human rights federally
- This is meaningful for transgender Canadians

The other side of the coin

- US 2015 transgender survey
- 40% reported attempting suicide vs 4.6% for US population as a whole
- 7% reported attempting suicide in the last year compared to 0.6% of the population

US Survey 2015

- 1.4% were HIV positive vs 0.3% of population
- 3.4% among transgender women and as high as 19% in black transgender women
- 77% reported some experience of mistreatment in school
- 17% left school due to this treatment
- 24% were physically assaulted

US Survey

- 16% reported losing a job due to transgender identity
- 27% reported being fired, denied a promotion or not being hired
- 15% were verbally, physically or sexually assaulted at work

US Survey

- 23% experienced housing discrimination
- 33% have experienced homelessness in their lifetime
- in the past year 12% were homeless
- 26% avoided using a shelter due to risk of violence at shelters due to being transgender

US Survey

- 57% felt uncomfortable asking the police for help
- 58% reported being mistreated by the police including being forced to engage in sexual acts to avoid arrest
- transgender persons were five times more likely to be assaulted by facility staff and nine times more likely to be assaulted by other inmates

US Survey

- 46% reported being verbally harassed
- 9% were physically attacked
- 31% reported being mistreated in a place of public accommodation

Family Acceptance Project

- youth with highly rejecting families were 8x more likely to attempt suicide
- 6x as likely to report significant depression
- 3x more likely to use illicit drugs
- 3x more likely to be at high risk for HIV or sexually transmitted diseases

Population

- 4-10% of population will identify as LGBTQ
- Up to 50% of people under the age of 30 have had same sex experience
- 0.5-1% of population will identify as transgender
- 10 fold increase in presentations to youth gender clinics around the Western world

Conclusions

- As providers we need to be aware of the needs of LGBTQ populations in our Emergency Departments, Clinics and Offices
- Respectful language and kindness aren't difficult and are the first step in making LGBTQ patients welcome in healthcare