2014 LGBT Population Health Clerkship: Focusing on Trans Health
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Transgender Population

Transgender refers to a person who is born with the genetic traits of one gender but has the internalized identity of another gender
Population estimate: 700,000 individuals in the United States
Health Disparities compared to the general population:
Higher rates of:
- Substance abuse
- Psychiatric disorders
- Suicide (41% attempted suicide compared to 1.6%)
HIV/STIs
Barriers to medical care:
- Economically disadvantaged
- Geographic and social isolation
- Lack of insurance coverage
- Lack of clinical research and limited medical literature
- Provider ignorance
Social Factors that contribute to worse health outcomes:
- Extreme poverty
- Homelessness
- Employment discrimination
- Intersection with race: transgender people of color in general fare much worse than transgender whites
- especially African American transgender people

Service Project Examples

LGBT Asylum Support Task Force
- Goal: organize fundraiser
- Progress: presented percentage of profit plan to several local businesses
- Outcomes: identified 4 businesses with interest; Pure Juz agreed to donate 10% of profits from 11/3/14

AIDS Project Worcester
- Goal: create directory of local doctors with trans health experience
- Progress: conducted phone/email survey of local clinics/hospitals
- Outcomes: most area providers refer transgender patients elsewhere as they do not provide hormone therapy

Safe Homes Worcester
- Goal: develop a safety survey to identify needs of the population
- Progress: distributed survey to 37 LGBT youth
- Outcomes: most LGBT youth feel safe in their home, community, and school; Safe Homes has produced positive outcomes for LGBT youth

Fenway Health
- Goal: develop community information session on trans health
- Progress: created PowerPoint covering hormones, surgery, name change process, general health, and local support groups
- Outcomes: community information and resource session will become a recurring event presented quarterly to trans patients and their families

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

Importance of sensitivity when treating transgender patients:
- Most have experienced some form trauma/discrimination
- 78% of trans people have experienced harassment in school or work
- 57% experience rejection from their families
- Unless critical, best to have good rapport with patient before examining sensitive areas (e.g., pelvic exams)
- Very important to collaborate with transgender patients in your care in order to best serve them – get a good history
- Older transgender patients who transitioned without medical care can provide important information about what hormones they used and what other procedures they have undergone (i.e. silicone injections)

Lack of research:
- Very little data available about transgender health
- Insurance companies require evidence-based outcomes research in order to provide coverage for transgender care

Lessons Learned: Key Distinctions

Important to know these distinctions to:
- Gain a full understanding of the patient’s psychosocial state
- Show cultural competency
- Build trust and rapport with patient

Interprofessional Network

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References

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