



LGBT HEALTH

A PATIENT-CENTERED SURVEY TO ADDRESS HAIR DISORDERS IN TRANSPeOPLE

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Introduction: Transgender individuals experience common and unique hair concerns throughout the gender transitioning process. Exogenous estrogen and anti-testosterone therapy are insufficient to eradicate facial and body hair in transwomen. Laser hair therapy and electrolysis are thus necessary for permanent hair removal. These procedures, furthermore, serve as prerequisites for gender confirmation surgery to prevent hair growth into the neovagina or neophallus. In addition, exogenous testosterone therapy can induce androgenetic alopecia (AGA) which may or may not be desired by transmen. AGA, however, represents a serious concern in transwoman who may have developed male pattern hair loss prior to transition and subsequently require hair transplant surgery. Despite the variety and potential impact of hair disorders in transgender individuals, little is known about the associated prevalence, severity, and treatment interventions.

Objective: The purpose of this survey was to understand the spectrum, magnitude, and severity of common hair concerns faced by transpeople and to recognize the psychological, social, and financial implications as seen through the patient experience.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional study utilized a comprehensive, online survey distributed through REDCap to examine hair disorders in transgender people. The Massachusetts General Hospital Institutional Review Board determined the current study as exempt from further review in August 2018. The survey was successively distributed throughout social media on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender-focused platforms. Only respondents 18 years or older who identified as transgender or gender non-binary and lived in the United States were included in the study.

Results: Most transgender individuals reported previous and/or active hair concerns, including both hair loss and excess hair. Respondents indicated psychological, social, and financial implications associated with their hair disease.

Conclusions: Dermatologists should understand the spectrum and implications of hair disorders in transgender patients and continue to provide patient-centered care to all persons irrespective of gender identity.

