

Goldsen et al., 2014). Risk factors specific to TGD elders include gender- and age-related discrimination, general stress, identity concealment, victimization, and internalized stigma, while social support and community belonging appear protective (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2014; Hoy-Ellis & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017; White Hughto & Reisner, 2018). PCPs can assist patients by encouraging spirituality, self-acceptance and self-advocacy, and an active healthy lifestyle, all of which are associated with resilience and successful aging (McFadden et al., 2013; Witten, 2014).

TGD elders often face social isolation, loss of support systems, and disconnection from close friends and children (Fredriksen-Goldsen 2011; Witten, 2017). The most common aging concerns among TGD persons are losing the ability to care for themselves followed by having to go into a nursing home or assisted living facility (Henry et al., 2020). While long-term care settings offer the helpful needed assistance, they also have the potential for physical or emotional abuse, for denial of GAHT and routine care, for being “outed,” and being prevented from living and dressing according to one’s affirmed gender (Auldridge et al., 2012; Pang et al., 2019; Porter et al., 2016). TGD elders identify senior housing, transportation, social events, support groups as being the most needed services (Auldridge et al., 2012; Witten, 2014).

Despite barriers, most TGD persons engage in successful aging strengthened by self-acceptance, caring relationships, and advocacy (Fredriksen-Goldsen 2011; Witten, 2014). PCPs should address core health issues facing TGD elders, including mental health, gender-affirming medical interventions, social support, and end of life/long-term care.

Beyond the independent impact of factors such as minority stress and social determinants of health in later years, data are lacking on specific health issues facing transgender people who use GAHT later in life, individuals who began GAHT at a younger age, and those seeking to continue or begin GAHT in their sixth, seventh, eighth, or later decades. With an increasing proportion of transgender people beginning GAHT at younger ages, including some who begin at the time of puberty, studies to examine the impact of decades of such treatment on long-term health are ever more important.

Statement 15.6

We recommend health care professionals follow local breast cancer screening guidelines developed for cisgender women in their care of transgender and gender diverse people who have received estrogens, taking into consideration length of time of hormone use, dosing, current age, and the age at which hormones were initiated.

TGD individuals taking estrogen-based GAHT will develop breasts, and therefore warrant consideration for breast cancer screening. Exogenous estrogen may be one of multiple factors that contribute to breast cancer risk in cisgender people. Two cohort studies have been published evaluating breast cancer prevalence among transgender women in the Netherlands (Gooren et al., 2013) and the US (Brown & Jones, 2015). Both were retrospective cohorts of clinical samples using a diagnosis of breast cancer as the outcome of interest and cisgender controls as a comparison group. Neither study involved prospective screening for breast cancer, and both had significant methodological limitations. Numerous guidelines have been published (Deutsch, 2016a) recommending some combination of “age plus length of estrogen exposure” as the determinant of need to commence screening. These recommendations are based on expert consensus only and are evidentially weak.

BRCA1 and 2 mutations increase the risk of breast cancer, however the role sex hormone exposure plays, if any, in this increased risk is unclear (Rebbeck et al., 2005) The degree of increase in risk, if any, from gender-affirming estrogen therapy is unknown. Patients with a known BRCA1 mutation should be counseled about the unknowns and shared decision-making with informed consent should occur between the patient and provider, recognizing the numerous benefits of GAHT.

Breast cancer screening among transgender women should also take into consideration the likelihood that a transgender woman’s breasts may be denser on mammography. Dense breasts, a history of injecting breasts with fillers such as silicone, and breast implants may complicate the interpretation of mammographic findings (Sonnenblick et al., 2018). Therefore, special

techniques should be used accordingly. People who have injected particles such as silicone or other fillers for breast augmentation may also develop complications, such as sclerosing lipogranulomas, which obscure normal tissue on mammography or ultrasound.

Statement 15.7

We recommend health care professionals follow local breast cancer screening guidelines developed for cisgender women in their care of transgender and gender diverse people with breasts from natal puberty who have not had gender-affirming chest surgery.

For TGD people assigned female at birth and who developed breasts via natal puberty, there are theoretical concerns about whether direct exposure to testosterone and exposure to aromatized estrogen resulting from testosterone therapy are risk factors for the development of breast cancer. Limited retrospective data has not demonstrated increased risk for breast cancer among transgender men (Gooren et al., 2013; Grynberg et al., 2010), however prospective and comparison data are lacking. Most people in this group will have some breast tissue remaining, and therefore it is important for providers to be aware breast cancer risk is not zero in this population. The timing and approach to breast cancer screening in this group who have had chest surgery is currently not established, and, similar to cisgender men with significant family history or BRCA gene mutation, screening via MRI or ultrasound may be appropriate. Because the utility and performance of these approaches have not been studied and because self- and HCP-led chest/breast screening exams are not recommended in cisgender women due to potential harms of both false-positive results and over-detection (detection of a cancer which would have regressed on its own with no need for intervention), any approach to screening in this group should occur in the context of shared decision-making between patients and providers regarding the potential harms, benefits, and unknowns of these approaches.

Statement 15.8

We recommend health care professionals apply the same respective local screening guidelines

(including the recommendation not to screen) developed for cisgender women at average and elevated risk for developing ovarian or endometrial cancer in their care of transgender and gender diverse people who have the same risks.

Current consensus guidelines do not recommend routine ovarian cancer screening for cisgender women. Case reports of ovarian cancer among transgender men have been reported (Dizon et al., 2006; Hage et al., 2000). There is currently no evidence testosterone therapy leads to an increased risk of ovarian cancer, although long-term prospective studies are lacking (Joint et al., 2018).

Statement 15.9

We recommend against routine oophorectomy or hysterectomy solely for the purpose of preventing ovarian or uterine cancer for transgender and gender diverse people undergoing testosterone treatment and who have an otherwise average risk of malignancy.

TGD people with ovaries who are taking testosterone-based GAHT are often in an oligo- or anovulatory state, or otherwise experience shifts in luteal phase function and progesterone production. This condition combined with the possible increased estrogen exposure from aromatization of exogenous testosterone raises the concern for excessive or unopposed endometrial estrogen exposure, although the clinical significance is unknown. Histologic studies of the endometrium in TGD people taking testosterone have found atrophy rather than hyperplasia (Grimstad et al., 2018; Grynberg et al., 2010; Perrone et al., 2009). In a large cohort of trans masculine people who underwent a hysterectomy with oophorectomy, benign ovarian histopathology was noted in all cases (n = 85) (Grimstad et al., 2020). While prospective outcome data are lacking, there is insufficient evidence at this time to support a recommendation transgender men undergo routine hysterectomy or oophorectomy solely to prevent endometrial or ovarian cancer. Certainly, unexplained signs/symptoms of endometrial or ovarian cancer should be evaluated appropriately.

Statement 15.10

We recommend health care professionals offer cervical cancer screening to transgender and

gender diverse people who currently have or previously had a cervix, following local guidelines for cisgender women.

Individuals with a cervix should undergo routine cervical cancer screening and prevention according to age-based regional practices and guidelines. This includes vaccination against the human papilloma virus (HPV) and screening according to local guidelines, including cytologic, high-HPV co-testing if available. It is important HCPs be mindful of performing pelvic speculum examinations in a manner that minimizes pain and distress for transgender masculine people.

TGD people with a cervix are less likely to have had conventional cervical cancer screening, either because the exam can cause worsening of dysphoria and/or because general practitioners and patients are misinformed about the need for this screening (Agenor et al., 2016; Potter et al., 2015). In addition, testosterone therapy can result in atrophic changes of the genital tract, and the duration of testosterone use has been associated with a greater likelihood of obtaining an inadequate sample for cytologic screening of cervical cancer (Peitzmeier et al., 2014). Alternatives to speculum exams and cervical cytology, such as provider- or self-collected high-risk HPV swabs, may be of particular benefit for screening people with a cervix. Research underway in the US is investigating the use of self-collected vaginal high-risk HPV testing among transgender masculine populations. HPV swabs were found to be highly acceptable among transgender men with a sensitivity to high-risk HPV of 71.4% (negative predictive value of 94.7%) and a specificity of 98.2% (Reisner et al., 2018). Further study is needed to evaluate the harms of HPV primary screening in transgender men in terms of the potential increased harms associated with invasive examinations and colposcopies.

Statement 15.11

We recommend health care professionals counsel transgender and gender diverse people that the use of antiretroviral medications is not a contraindication to gender-affirming hormone therapy.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevalence is disproportionately high in TGD

populations. A recent large metanalysis found a global odds ratio for HIV infection of sixty-six for trans feminine individuals and 6.8 for trans masculine individuals (Stutterheim et al., 2021). PCPs have unique opportunities to provide crucial education and implement prevention strategies, especially related to decreasing HIV burden among TGD people. Mistrust of health care providers due to past experiences of discrimination and transphobia impacts HIV prevention and disrupts the linkage to care efforts (Sevelius et al., 2016). Stigma, lack of adequate training, and innate power hierarchies within medical establishments, all contribute to ambivalence and uncertainty among HCPs when caring for TGD people (Poteat et al., 2013). Finally, a lack of inclusiveness and gender-affirming practices in the health care setting may lead to TGD people feeling unsafe discussing sensitive topics, such as HIV diagnosis and avoiding care out of fear (Bauer et al., 2014; Gibson et al., 2016; Seelman et al., 2017).

HCPs should be aware of this broader context within which many TGD people are seeking care for either gender-affirming hormones, HIV pre-exposure chemoprophylaxis/treatment (PrEP), or both. There may be various misconceptions about the safety of taking gender-affirming hormones concurrently with antiretroviral therapy for HIV chemoprophylaxis or treatment.

Direct study of antiretroviral/gender-affirming hormone therapy (ART/GAHT) interactions has been limited. A subanalysis of transgender women and trans feminine persons in the multinational iPrEx trial found poor effectiveness in this group in the intention-to-treat analysis, although effectiveness was similar to that in cisgender gay men among those transgender participants who adhered to the medication as prescribed, suggesting that uptake and adherence to PrEP remain challenging in this population. Two studies of the effects of GAHT on tenofovir diphosphate (Grant et al., 2021) and tenofovir diphosphate and emtricitabine (Shieh et al., 2019) found the significantly lowered ART drug levels were unlikely to be of clinical significance. Overall, data on the interactions between hormonal contraceptives and antiretrovirals are reassuring in terms of the impact of hormones on ART (Nanda

et al., 2017). Because estradiol is partially metabolized by cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and 1A2 enzymes, potential drug interactions with other medications that induce or inhibit these pathways, such as non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs, e.g., efavirenz (EFV) and nevirapine (NVP)), may exist (Badowski et al., 2021). However, the preferred first-line ART regimens in most countries include integrase inhibitors, which have minimal to no drug interactions with gender-affirming hormones and can be used safely (Badowski, 2021; Department of Health and Human Services. Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, 2021). If concerns exist about potential interactions, HCPs should monitor blood hormone levels as needed. Therefore, TGD people living with HIV and taking antiretroviral medications should be counseled that taking antiretrovirals alongside GAHT is safe.

Statement 15.12

We recommend health care professionals obtain a detailed medical history from transgender and gender diverse people that includes past and present use of hormones, gonadal surgeries as well as the presence of traditional osteoporosis risk factors, to assess the optimal age and necessity for osteoporosis screening. For supporting text, see Statement 15.13.

Statement 15.13

We recommend health care professionals discuss bone health with transgender and gender diverse people including the need for active weight bearing exercise, healthy diet, calcium, and vitamin D supplementation.

Estrogen and testosterone both support bone formation and turnover. Decreased sex hormone levels are associated with a greater risk of osteoporosis in older age (Almeida et al., 2017). TGD individuals may receive medical and/or surgical interventions that have the potential to influence bone health, such as sex hormone treatment, androgen blockade, and gonadectomy. Therefore, a detailed medical history, including past and present use of hormones along with gonadal surgeries, is necessary to establish the need for osteoporosis screening.

Several observational studies have compared bone mineral density (BMD) of TGD adults before and after gender-affirming hormone therapy along with in TGD individuals compared with sex-at-birth matched cisgender controls.

Low BMD may exist before the initiation of hormones. One study showed a lower mean areal BMD at the femoral neck, total hip, and spine in transgender women than in age-matched cisgender male controls (Van Caenegem, Taes et al., 2013). Another study revealed a high prevalence of low BMD scores among TGD youth before starting puberty blockers (Lee, Finlayson et al., 2020). The authors of both studies concluded low rates of physical activity may be an important contributor to these findings.

Acceleration of bone loss can occur after gonadectomy if hormones are stopped or if hormones levels are suboptimal. In one study, thirty percent of transgender women who had undergone gonadectomy had low bone mass, and this correlated with lower 17- β estradiol levels and adherence to GAHT (Motta et al., 2020).

Investigation of the effects of GAHT on BMD have revealed TGD women receiving estrogen therapy show improvements in BMD. A systematic review and meta-analysis on the impact of sex hormones on bone health of transgender individuals included 9 eligible studies in transgender women (n=392) and 8 eligible studies in transgender men (n=247) published between 2008 and 2015. The meta-analysis revealed transgender women showed a statistically significant increase in lumbar spine BMD (but not femoral neck BMD) compared with baseline measures. Among transgender men, there were no statistically significant changes in the lumbar spine, femoral neck, and total hip BMD at 12 and 24 months after starting testosterone compared with baseline measures (Singh-Ospina et al., 2017). Since the publication of this study, the European Network for Investigation of Gender Incongruence (ENIGI) study, a multicenter prospective observational study (Belgium, Norway, Italy, and the Netherlands) published results on BMD outcomes for 231 transgender women and 199 transgender men one year after initiating GAH (Wiepjes et al., 2017). Transgender women had an increase in BMD of the lumbar spine, total hip and

femoral neck, and increased BMD of the total hip occurred in transgender men. One study reported no fractures in transgender individuals at 12 months following initiation of hormones in 53 transgender men and 53 transgender women (Wierckx, van Caenegem et al., 2014). No studies suggest GAHT should be an indication for enhanced osteoporosis screening. Rather, gaps in GAHT in those who have undergone prior gonadectomy would be a consideration for such screening.

Clinical practice guidelines include recommendations for osteoporosis screening in TGD individuals (Deutsch, 2016a; Hembree et al., 2017; Rosen et al., 2019). For TGD people, both the International Society for Clinical Densitometry and the Endocrine Society suggest consideration of baseline BMD screening before initiation of hormones. Further recommendations for BMD screening are based on several factors including sex reported at birth and age along with the presence of traditional risk factors for osteoporosis, such as prior fracture, high risk medication use, conditions associated with bone loss, and low body weight (Rosen et al., 2019). Specifically, the ISCD guidelines state BMD testing is indicated for TGD individuals if they have a history of gonadectomy or therapy that lowers endogenous gonadal steroid levels prior to the initiation of GAHT, hypogonadism with no plan to take GAHT or known indications for BMD testing (Rosen et al., 2019). However, the evidentiary basis for these recommendations is weak.

The recommended screening modality for osteoporosis is dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) of the lumbar spine, total hip, and femoral neck (Kanis, 1994). However in many low- and middle-income countries, BMD tests using DXA are not available, and routine DXA-based screening is conducted in few countries, the US being an exception.

PCPs should discuss ways to optimize bone health with TGD people. In addition, PCPs should provide information about the importance of nutrition and exercise on maintaining bone health. TGD individuals with (or at risk) for osteoporosis should be informed about the benefits of weight bearing exercise along with strength and resistance exercises in limiting bone loss

(Benedetti et al., 2018). Nutrition is integral to bone health. Nutritional deficiencies, including insufficient calcium intake and low vitamin D, can result in low bone mineralization. Vitamin D and calcium supplementation have been shown to reduce hip as well as total fracture incidence (Weaver et al., 2016). Although relevant to all populations, this discussion is pertinent as a high prevalence of hypovitaminosis D has been observed in TGD populations (Motta et al., 2020; Van Caenegem, Taes et al., 2013).

Statement 15.14

We recommend health care professionals offer transgender and gender diverse people referrals for hair removal from the face, body, and genital areas for gender-affirmation or as part of a preoperative preparation process.

Hair removal is necessary both for the elimination of facial hair (Marks et al., 2019) as well as in preparation for certain gender-affirming surgeries (GAS) such as vaginoplasty, phalloplasty, and metoidioplasty (Zhang et al., 2016). Preoperative permanent hair removal is required for any skin area that will either be brought into contact with urine (e.g., used to construct a neourethra) or be moved to reside within a partially closed cavity within the body (e.g., used to line the neovagina) (Zhang et al., 2016). Hair removal techniques used in gender-affirming care are electrolysis hair removal (EHR) and laser hair removal (LHR) (Fernandez et al., 2013). EHR is currently the only US Food and Drug Administration–approved method of permanent hair removal, whereas LHR is approved for permanent hair reduction (Thoreson et al., 2020).

EHR involves the use of an electric current with a very fine probe that is manually inserted sequentially into individual hair follicles (Martin et al., 2018). Since this method uses direct mechanical destruction of the blood supply to the hair, it can be used on all hair colors and skin types (Martin et al., 2018). EHR is time consuming and costly as it requires each hair follicle to be treated individually, but is effective for permanent hair removal. For genital permanent hair removal prior to GAS, this treatment needs to be performed by a practitioner competent in genital hair removal as this method differs

from that of the face and body. EHR is more painful than LHR, with possible side effects of erythema, crusting, and swelling (Harris et al., 2014). Postinflammatory hyperpigmentation is a risk for dark-skinned individuals (Richards & Meharg, 1995). Pain can be controlled with topical local anesthetic and cooling techniques, and tolerance to EHR does develop to some degree with many persons able to tolerate longer sessions (Richards & Meharg, 1995).

LHR uses laser energy to target hair follicles. It is beneficial for larger surface areas. The mechanism is photo-thermolysis, whereby light from a laser selectively targets melanin in the hair shaft (Gao et al., 2018). This energy is converted to heat, which damages the follicles within the skin that produce hairs and results in the destruction of hair growth. Further treatments are needed to achieve best results and are typically spaced six weeks apart to allow for hair cycling (Zhang et al., 2016). Because LHR targets melanin, results may be limited for those with grey, blonde, or red hair.

There are specific considerations for using LHR in dark-skinned individuals (Fitzpatrick skin types IV to VI) (Fayne et al., 2018)). The higher melanin content of the epidermis can compete with the target chromophore of the light or laser, which is the melanin in the hair shaft of the hair follicle. For selective thermolysis to occur, heat

diffuses from the hair shaft to the follicular stem cells to cause damage. In darker skin types, rather than reaching the target melanin in the hair shaft, light is absorbed in the epidermis where it is then converted to heat. This may result in poorer clinical outcomes and a higher rate of thermally induced adverse effects, such as hypo- or hyperpigmentation, blistering, and crust formation (Fayne et al., 2018). The selection of laser wavelength is critical in reducing this risk, with longer wavelength recommended to minimize the absorption of light in epidermal melanin and thus maximize efficacy and minimize adverse effects in patients with dark skin (Zhang et al., 2016). Side effects from LHR can include the feeling of sunburnt after treatment, as well as inflammation, redness, hyperpigmentation, and swelling. Flashing lights have been known to induce seizures in susceptible patients, so patients should be screened for this risk. Pain and discomfort during the procedure can also represent a significant barrier, and PCPs should be prepared to prescribe topical or systemic analgesics, such as a eutectic mixture of local anesthetics (EMLA) or a low dose systemic opioid. For genital GAS, some have recommended a 3-month wait after the last planned hair removal treatment before proceeding with surgery to confirm that no further hair regrowth will occur (Zhang et al., 2016).

CHAPTER 16 Reproductive Health

All humans, including transgender individuals, have the reproductive right to decide whether or not to have children (United Nations Population Fund, 2014). Medically necessary gender-affirming hormonal treatments (GAHTs) and surgical interventions (see medically necessary statement in Chapter 2—Global Applicability, Statement 2.1) that alter reproductive anatomy or function may limit future reproductive options to varying degrees (Hembree et al., 2017; Nahata et al., 2019). It is thus critical to discuss infertility risk and fertility preservation (FP) options with transgender individuals and their families prior to initiating any of these treatments and to continue these conversations on an ongoing basis thereafter (Hembree et al., 2017). Established FP options, such as embryo, oocyte, and sperm cryopreservation, may be available for postpubertal transgender individuals (Nahata et al., 2019). Research protocols for ovarian and testicular tissue cryopreservation have also been developed and studied (Borgström et al., 2020; Nahata et al., 2019; Rodriguez-Wallberg, et al., 2019). Whereas the use of embryos, mature oocytes, and sperm have all proven to be efficacious when employed within clinical treatments, cryopreserved gonadal tissues would require either future retransplantation aimed at obtaining fully functional gametes or the application of laboratory methods for culture, which are still under development in basic science research settings. Of note, recent American Society for Reproductive Medicine guidelines have lifted the experimental label on ovarian tissue cryopreservation, but evidence remains limited in prepubertal children (Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2019).

Individualized care should be provided in the context of each person's parenthood goals. Some research suggests transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people may be less likely to desire genetically related children or children at all when compared with cisgender peers (Defreyne, van Schuylenbergh et al., 2020; Russell et al., 2016; von Doussa et al., 2015). Yet, several other studies have shown many TGD individuals 1) desire

genetically related children; 2) regret missed opportunities for FP; and 3) are willing to delay or interrupt hormone therapy to preserve fertility and/or conceive (Armuan, Dhejne et al., 2017; Auer et al., 2018; De Sutter et al., 2002; Defreyne, van Schuylenbergh et al., 2020; Tornello & Bos, 2017).

Many barriers to FP have been reported, such as cost (which is exacerbated when insurance coverage is lacking), urgency to start treatment, inability to make future-oriented decisions, inadequate provider knowledge/provider biases that affect offering FP, and difficulties accessing FP (Baram et al., 2019; Defreyne, van Schuylenbergh et al., 2020). Additionally, transgender individuals may have worsening dysphoria due to various steps in the FP process that are inseparably connected with the gender assigned at birth (Armuan, Dhejne, et al., 2017; Baram et al., 2019). When available, a multidisciplinary team approach, where both medical and mental health providers collaborate with gender-affirming fertility specialists, can help overcome some of these barriers (Tishelman et al., 2019). TGD individuals should be educated about the distinction between fertility (utilizing one's own gametes/reproductive tissues) and pregnancy. In addition to fertility considerations, efforts to ensure equitable high-quality care for all forms of family planning and building throughout the full reproductive continuum must be maintained. This includes procreative options such as perinatal care, pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum care, as well as family planning and contraceptive options to prevent unplanned pregnancies, and pregnancy termination if sanctioned (Bonnington et al., 2020; Cipres et al., 2017; Krempasky et al., 2020; Light et al., 2018; Moseson, Fix et al., 2020). TGD people who wish to carry a pregnancy should undergo standard of care preconception care and prenatal counseling and should receive counseling about breast/chest feeding in environments supportive of people with diverse gender identities and experiences (MacDonald et al., 2016; Obedin-Maliver & Makadon, 2016).

All the statements in this chapter have been recommended based on a thorough review of evidence, an assessment of the benefits and

Statements of Recommendations

16.1- We recommend health care professionals who are treating transgender and gender diverse people and prescribing or referring patients for hormone therapies/surgeries advise their patients about:

16.1.a- Known effects of hormone therapies/surgery on future fertility;

16.1.b- Potential effects of therapies that are not well studied and are of unknown reversibility;

16.1.c- Fertility preservation (FP) options (both established and experimental);

16.1.d- Psychosocial implications of infertility.

16.2- We recommend health care professionals refer transgender and gender diverse people interested in fertility preservation to providers with expertise in fertility preservation for further discussion.

16.3- We recommend transgender care teams partner with local reproductive specialists and facilities to provide specific and timely information and fertility preservation services prior to offering medical and surgical interventions that may impact fertility.

16.4- We recommend health care professionals counsel pre- or early-pubertal transgender and gender diverse youth seeking gender-affirming therapy and their families that currently evidence-based/established fertility preservation options are limited.

16.5- We recommend transgender and gender diverse people with a uterus who wish to carry a pregnancy undergo preconception care, prenatal counseling regarding use and cessation of gender-affirming hormones, pregnancy care, labor and delivery, chest/breast feeding supportive services, and postpartum support according to local standards of care in a gender-affirming way.

16.6. We recommend medical providers discuss contraception methods with transgender and gender diverse people who engage in sexual activity that can result in pregnancy.

16.7. We recommend providers who offer pregnancy termination services ensure procedural options are gender-affirming and serve transgender people and those of diverse genders.

harms, values and preferences of providers and patients, and resource use and feasibility. In some cases, we recognize evidence is limited and/or services may not be accessible or desirable.

Statement 16.1

We recommend health care professionals who are treating transgender and gender diverse people and prescribing or referring patients for hormone therapies/surgeries advise their patients about:

- a. Known effects of hormone therapies/surgeries on future fertility;**
- b. Potential effects of therapies that are not well studied and are of unknown reversibility;**
- c. Fertility preservation (FP) options (both established and experimental);**
- d. Psychosocial implications of infertility.**

TGD individuals assigned female at birth

GAHT may negatively impact future reproductive capacity (Hembree et al., 2017). Based on current evidence in transgender men and gender diverse people assigned female at birth, these risks are as follows:

Gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists (GnRHAs) may be used for pubertal suppression to prevent further pubertal progression until adolescents are ready for masculinizing treatment. GnRHAs may also be used for menstrual

suppression. GnRHAs impact the maturation of gametes but do not cause permanent damage to gonadal function. Thus, if GnRHAs are discontinued, oocyte maturation would be expected to resume.

There are few studies detailing the effects of testosterone therapy on reproductive function in transgender men (Moravek et al., 2020). Restoration of normal ovarian function with oocyte maturation after testosterone interruption has been demonstrated in transgender men who have achieved natural conception. A retrospective study on oocyte cryopreservation showed no differences in the total number of oocytes retrieved or in the number of mature oocytes between transgender men and age- and BMI-matched cisgender women (Adeleye et al., 2018, 2019). The first results have recently been published evaluating live birth rates after controlled ovarian stimulation in transgender men compared with cisgender women (Leung et al., 2019). Testosterone was discontinued prior to ovarian stimulation. Overall, the results concerning the influence of testosterone on reproductive organs and their function appear to be reassuring. However, there have been no prospective studies to date evaluating the effect of long-term hormone therapy on fertility (i.e., started in adolescence) or in those treated with GnRHAs in early puberty followed by testosterone therapy. It is important to take into consideration that required medications and procedures for cryopreserving oocytes (a

pelvic examination, vaginal ultrasound monitoring, and oocyte retrievals) may lead to increasing gender dysphoria in transgender men (Armund, Dhejne et al., 2017).

Surgical interventions among transgender men will have obvious implications for reproductive capacity. If patients desire a hysterectomy, the option should be offered of preserving the ovaries to retain the possibility of having a genetically related child. Alternatively, if the ovaries are removed either separately or concurrently with the hysterectomy, egg freezing should be offered prior to surgery and/or ovarian tissue cryopreservation can be done at the time of oophorectomy. Although this procedure is no longer considered experimental, many transgender men may desire *in vitro* maturation of primordial follicles, which is still investigational. Studies evaluating oocyte function have shown oocytes isolated from transgender men with testosterone exposure at the time of oophorectomy can be matured *in vitro* to develop normal metaphase II meiotic spindle structure (De Roo et al., 2017; Lierman et al., 2017).

TGD individuals assigned male at birth

Based on current evidence in transgender women and gender diverse people assigned male at birth (AMAB), the influence of medical treatment is as follows:

GnRHs inhibit spermatogenesis. Data suggest discontinuation of treatment results in a re-initiation of spermatogenesis, although this may take at least 3 months and most likely longer (Bertelloni et al., 2000). Furthermore, the psychological burden of re-exposure to testosterone should be considered.

Anti-androgens and estrogens result in an impaired sperm production (de Nie et al., 2020; Jindarak et al., 2018; Kent et al., 2018). Spermatogenesis might resume after discontinuation of prolonged treatment with anti-androgens and estrogens, but data are limited (Adeleye et al., 2019; Alford et al., 2020; Schneider et al., 2017). Testicular volumes diminish under the influence of gender-affirming hormone treatment (Matoso et al., 2018). Semen quality in transgender women may also be negatively affected by specific life-style factors, such as a low frequency

of masturbation, wearing the genitals tight against the body (e.g., with use of tight undergarments for tucking) (Jung & Schuppe, 2007; Mieusset et al., 1985, 1987; Rodriguez-Wallberg, Häljestig et al., 2021).

Statement 16.2

We recommend health care professionals refer transgender and gender diverse people interested in fertility preservation to providers with expertise in fertility preservation for further discussion.

Research shows many transgender adults desire biological children (De Sutter et al., 2002; Defreyne, van Schuylenbergh et al., 2020; Wierckx, Van Caenegem et al., 2012), yet FP rates remain widely variable, particularly in youth (< 5%–40%) (Brik et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2017; Chiniara et al., 2019; Nahata et al., 2017; Segev-Becker et al., 2020). In a recent survey, many youth acknowledged their feelings about having a biological child might change in the future (Strang, Jarin et al., 2018). Non-elective sterilization is a violation of human rights (Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2015; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021; Meyer III et al., 2001) and due to advances in social attitudes, fertility medicine, and affirmative transgender health care, opportunities for biological parenthood during transition should be supported for transgender people. Due to the influence clinical opinion may have on transgender or nonbinary people's FP and on parenting decisions, FP options should be explored by health care providers alongside options such as fostering, adoption, coparenting, and other parenting alternatives (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2019). Transgender patients who have been offered this type of discussion and have been given the choice to undergo procedures for FP have reported the experience to be an overall positive one (Armund, Dhejne et al., 2017; De Sutter et al., 2002; James-Abra et al., 2015).

In other patient populations, fertility referrals and formal fertility programs have been shown to increase FP rates and improve patient satisfaction (Kelvin et al., 2016; Klosky, Anderson et al., 2017; Klosky, Wang et al., 2017;

Shnorhavorian et al., 2012) Physician attitudes have been investigated, and recent studies indicate both an awareness and a desire to provide fertility-related information to children and their families (Armund et al., 2020). However, barriers have also been identified, including lack of knowledge, comfort, and resources (Armund, Nilsson et al., 2017; Frederick et al., 2018). Thus, the need for appropriate training of health care providers has been highlighted, with emphasis placed on fertility counseling and offering FP options to all at-risk individuals in an unbiased way (Armund, Nilsson et al., 2017). Parents' recommendations have also been shown to significantly influence FP rates in adolescent and young adult males with cancer (Klosky, Flynn et al., 2017). While there are clear clinical differences in these populations, these findings can help inform best practices for fertility counseling and FP referrals for transgender individuals.

Statement 16.3

We recommend transgender care teams partner with local reproductive specialists and facilities to provide specific and timely information and fertility preservation services prior to offering medical and surgical interventions that may impact fertility.

Cryopreservation of sperm and oocytes are established FP techniques and can be offered to pubertal, late pubertal, and adult birth assigned males and birth assigned females, respectively, preferably prior to the initiation of GAHT (Hembree et al., 2017; Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2019). Cryopreservation of embryos can be offered to adult (post-pubertal) TGD people who wish to have a child and have an available partner. The future use of cryopreserved gametes is also dependent on the gametes and reproductive organs of the future partner (Fischer, 2021; Maxwell et al., 2017)

Although semen parameters have been shown to be compromised when FP is performed after initiation of GAH medication (Adeleye et al., 2019), one small study showed when the treatment was discontinued, semen parameters were comparable to those in TGD patients who had

never undergone GAH treatment. With regard to ovarian stimulation, oocyte vitrification yield and subsequent use of the oocytes in in-vitro fertilization (IVF), there is no reason to anticipate a different outcome in assisted reproductive technology (ART) treatments for TGD patients than that obtained in cisgender patients undergoing ART—other than individual confounding factors related to (in)fertility—when gametes are banked prior to any medical treatment (Adeleye et al., 2019). The use of oocytes in ART treatment resulted in similarly successful outcomes in TGD compared with controlled, matched cisgender patients (Adeleye et al., 2019; Leung et al., 2019; Maxwell et al., 2017).

Although these are established options, few pubertal, late pubertal or adult TGD people undergo FP (Nahata et al., 2017), and many experience challenges while undergoing FP interventions. Not only is access and cost of these methods a barrier (particularly in regions without insurance coverage), but these procedures are often physically and emotionally uncomfortable, and many express concerns about postponing the transitioning process (Chen et al., 2017; De Sutter et al., 2002; Nahata et al., 2017; Wierckx, Stuyver et al., 2012). Especially for the birth assigned females, the invasiveness of endovaginal ultrasound follow-up of the ovarian stimulation and oocyte retrieval procedures (and associated psychological distress) have been cited as a barrier (Armund, Dhejne et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2017). There is also the concern young adults going through transitioning may not have a clear vision of parenting and are therefore likely to decline the opportunity to use FP at that time—while as adults, they may have different opinions about parenthood (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000). The reduction of gender dysphoria during transitioning could also influence the decision-making process surrounding FP (Nahata et al., 2017). Based on research showing TGD youths' fertility perspectives may change over time (Nahata et al., 2019; Strang, Jarin et al., 2018), FP options should be discussed on an ongoing basis.

Statement 16.4

We recommend health care professionals counsel pre- or early-pubertal transgender and

gender diverse youth seeking gender-affirming therapy and their families that currently evidence-based/established fertility preservation options are limited.

For prepubertal and early-pubertal children, FP options are limited to the storage of gonadal tissue. Although this option is available for TGD children in the same way that it is available for cisgender prepubertal and early-pubertal oncological patients, there is no literature describing the utilization of this approach in the transgender population. Ovarian tissue autotransplantation has resulted in over 130 live births in cisgender women. Most of these patients conceived naturally without ART (Donnez & Dolmans, 2015; Jadoul et al., 2017), and the majority stored their ovarian tissue either as adults or during puberty. Although the recent American Society for Reproductive Medicine guideline has lifted the experimental label from ovarian tissue cryopreservation (Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2019), there are very few case reports describing a successful pregnancy in a woman following the transplantation of ovarian tissue cryopreserved before puberty. Demeestere et al. (2015) and Rodriguez-Wallberg, Milenkovic et al. (2021) described cases of successful pregnancies following transplantation of tissue procured at the age of 14, and recently Matthews et al. (2018) described the case of a girl diagnosed with thalassemia who had ovarian tissue stored at the age of 9 and transplantation 14 years later. She subsequently conceived through IVF and delivered a healthy baby.

Currently, the only future clinical application for storing ovarian tissue is autotransplantation, which might be undesirable in a transgender man (due to the potentially undesirable effects of estrogen). A laboratory procedure that would make it possible to mature oocytes *in vitro* starting with ovarian tissue would be the ideal future application of stored ovarian tissue for transgender people, but this technique is currently only being investigated and optimized in basic science research settings (Ladanyi et al., 2017; Oktay et al., 2010).

Prepubertal procurement of testicular tissue has been documented as a low-risk procedure (Borgström et al., 2020; Ming et al., 2018). Some

authors have also described this approach as a theoretical option in transgender people (De Roo et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2017; Nahata, Curci et al., 2018). However, there are no reports in the literature describing the clinical or investigational utilization of this FP option for TGD patients. Moreover, the viability of the clinical application of autotransplantation of testicular tissue remains unknown in humans, and *in vitro* maturation techniques are still in the realm of basic science research. Thus, specialists currently consider this technique experimental (Picton et al., 2015). The possibility of storing gonadal tissue should be discussed prior to any genital surgery that would result in sterilization, although the probability of being able to use this tissue must be clearly addressed.

Statement 16.5

We recommend transgender and gender diverse people with a uterus who wish to carry a pregnancy undergo preconception care and prenatal counseling regarding the use and cessation of gender-affirming hormones, pregnancy care, labor and delivery, chest/breast feeding supportive services, and postpartum support according to local standards of care in a gender-affirming way.

Most transgender men and gender diverse people (AFAB) retain their uterus and ovaries and thus can conceive and carry a pregnancy even after long-term testosterone use (Light et al., 2014). Many transgender men desire children (Light et al., 2018; Wierckx, van Caenegem et al., 2012) and are willing to carry a pregnancy (Moseson, Fix, Hastings et al., 2021; Moseson, Fix, Ragosta et al., 2021). ART has expanded the opportunity for many transgender men to conceive and fulfill their family planning wishes (De Roo et al., 2017; Ellis et al., 2015; Maxwell et al., 2017). Some transgender men report psychological isolation, dysphoria related to the gravid uterus and chest changes, and depression (Charter, 2018; Ellis et al., 2015; Hoffkling et al., 2017; Obedin-Maliver & Makadon, 2016). Conversely, other studies have reported some positive experiences during pregnancy as well (Fischer, 2021; Light et al., 2014). Mental health providers should be involved to provide support, and counseling should be

provided addressing when to stop and when to resume gender-affirming hormones, what options are available for the mode of delivery and for chest/breast feeding (Hoffkling et al., 2017). Finally, system-level and interpersonal-level interventions should be implemented to ensure person-centered reproductive health care for all people (Hahn et al., 2019; Hoffkling et al., 2017; Moseson, Zazanis et al., 2020; Snowden et al., 2018).

Given the potential harmful effects of testosterone on the developing embryo, discontinuing testosterone or masculinizing hormone therapy prior to conception and during the entire pregnancy is recommended. However, the optimal time for both the discontinuation of testosterone prior to pregnancy and its resumption after pregnancy is unknown. Since stopping gender-affirming hormones may cause distress and exacerbate dysphoria in transgender men, when and how to stop this therapy should be discussed during prenatal counseling (Hahn et al., 2019). Because information about the duration of testosterone exposure and the risk of teratogenicity is lacking, testosterone use should be discontinued prior to attempting pregnancy and before stopping contraception. Moreover, there is limited information regarding health outcomes of infants born to transgender men. Small case series attempting to evaluate this question have revealed no adverse physical or psychosocial differences between infants born to transgender men and infants in the general population (Chiland et al., 2013).

Chest/Breast feeding

In the limited studies evaluating lactation and chest/breast feeding, the majority of transgender men and TGD individuals AFAB who chose to chest/breast feed postpartum were successful, with research suggesting induction of lactation is in part dependent on preconception counseling and experienced lactation nursing support (MacDonald et al., 2016; Wolfe-Roubatis & Spatz, 2015). Specifically, transgender men and TGD people who use testosterone should be informed 1) although quantities are small, testosterone does pass through chest/breast milk; and 2) the impact on the developing neonate/child is unknown, and therefore gender-affirming testosterone use is not recommended during lactation but may be resumed after discontinuation of

chest/breast feeding (Glaser et al., 2009). Transgender men and other TGD individuals AFAB should be made aware some patients who carry a pregnancy may experience undesired chest growth and/or lactation even after chest reconstruction and should therefore be supported if they desire to suppress lactation (MacDonald et al., 2016).

There is limited information concerning lactation in transgender women as well as other TGD AMAB but many also express the desire to chest/breast feed. While there is a case report of a transgender woman successfully lactating and chest/breast feeding her infant after hormonal support using a combination of estrogen, progesterone, domperidone, and breast pumping (Reisman & Goldstein, 2018), the nutritional and immunological profile of chest/breast milk under these conditions has not been studied. Therefore, patients need to be informed about the risks and benefits of this approach to child feeding (Reisman & Goldstein, 2018).

Statement 16.6

We recommend medical providers discuss contraception methods with transgender and gender diverse people who engage in sexual activity that can result in pregnancy.

Many TGD individuals may retain reproductive capacity, and they (if they retain a uterus, ovaries, and tubes) or their sexual partners (for sperm producing individuals) may experience unplanned pregnancies (James et al., 2016; Light et al., 2014; Moseson, Fix et al., 2020). Therefore, intentional family planning counseling, including contraception and abortion conducted in gender-expansive ways is needed (Klein, Berry-Bibee et al., 2018; Obedin-Maliver, 2015; Stroumsa & Wu, 2018). TGD people AFAB may not use contraception due to an erroneous assumption that testosterone is a reliable form of contraception (Abern & Maguire, 2018; Ingraham et al., 2018; Jones, Wood et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2015). However, based on current understanding, testosterone should not be considered a reliable form of contraception because of its incomplete suppression of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Krempasky et al., 2020). Furthermore, pregnancies have occurred while individuals are amenorrheic due

to testosterone use, which may outlast active periods of administration (Light et al., 2014). Pregnancy can also occur in TGD people after long-term testosterone use (at least up to 10 years), although the effect on oocytes and baseline fertility is still unknown (Light et al., 2014).

TGD people AFAB may use a variety of contraceptive methods (Abern & Maguire, 2018; Bentsianov et al., 2018; Bonnington et al., 2020; Chrisler et al., 2016; Cipres et al., 2017; Jones, Wood et al., 2017; Krempasky et al., 2020; Light et al., 2018). These methods may be used explicitly for pregnancy prevention, menstrual suppression, abnormal bleeding, or other gynecological needs (Bonnington et al., 2020; Chrisler et al., 2016; Krempasky et al., 2020; Schwartz et al., 2019). Contraceptive research gaps within this population are profound. No studies have examined how the use of exogenous androgens (e.g., testosterone) may modify the efficacy or safety profile of hormonal contraceptive methods (e.g., combined estrogen and progestin hormonal contraceptives, progestin-only based contraceptives) or non-hormonal and barrier contraceptive methods (e.g., internal and external condoms, non-hormonal intrauterine devices, diaphragms, sponges, etc.).

Gender diverse individuals who currently have a penis and testicles may engage in sexual activity with individuals who have a uterus, ovaries, and tubes of any gender. Gender diverse people who have a penis and testicles can produce sperm even while on gender-affirming hormones (i.e., estrogen), and although semen parameters are diminished among those who are currently using or who have previously used gender-affirming hormones, azoospermia is not complete and sperm activity is not totally suppressed (Adeleye et al., 2019; Jindarak et al., 2018; Kent et al.,

2018). Therefore, contraception needs to be considered if pregnancy is to be avoided in penis-in-vagina sexual activity between a person with a uterus, ovaries, and tubes and one with a penis and testicles, irrespective of the use of gender-affirming hormones by either partner. Currently, contraceptive methods available for use by the sperm-producing partner are primarily mechanical barriers (i.e., external condoms, internal condoms), permanent sterilization (i.e., vasectomy), and gender-affirming surgery (e.g., orchiectomy, which also results in sterilization). Contraceptive counseling that considers sperm producing, egg producing, and gestating partners (as relevant) is recommended.

Statement 16.7

We recommend providers who offer pregnancy termination services ensure procedural approaches are gender-affirming and serve transgender people and those of diverse genders.

Unplanned pregnancies and abortions have been reported among TGD individuals with a uterus (Abern & Maguire, 2018; Light et al., 2014; Light et al., 2018; Moseson, Fix et al., 2020) and documented through surveys of abortion-providing facilities (Jones et al., 2020). However, the population-based epidemiology of abortion provision and the experiences and preferences of TGD individuals AFAB undergoing abortion still represents a critical gap in research (Fix et al., 2020; Moseson, Fix et al., 2020; Moseson, Lunn et al., 2020). Nonetheless, given that pregnancy capacity exists among many TGD people and pregnancies may not always be planned or desired, access to safe, legal, and gender-affirming pregnancy medical and surgical termination services is necessary.

CHAPTER 17 Sexual Health

Sexual health has a profound impact on physical and psychological well-being, regardless of one's sex, gender, or sexual orientation. However, stigma about sex, gender and sexual orientation influences individual's opportunities to live out their sexuality and to receive appropriate sexual health care. Specifically, in most societies, cisnormativity and heteronormativity lead to the assumption that all people are cisgender and heterosexual (Bauer et al., 2009), and that this combination is superior to all other genders and sexual orientations (Nieder, Güldenring et al., 2020; Rider, Vencill et al., 2019). Hetero-cisnormativity negates the complexity of gender, sexual orientation, and sexuality and disregards diversity and fluidity. This is all the more important since sexual identities, orientations, and practices of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people are characterized by an enormous diversity (Galupo et al., 2016; Jessen et al., 2021; Thurston & Allan, 2018; T'Sjoen et al., 2020). Likewise, a strong cross-cultural tendency toward allonormativity—the assumption that all people experience sexual attraction or interest in sexual activity—negates the diverse experiences of TGD people, especially those who locate themselves on the asexual spectrum (McInroy et al., 2021; Mollet, 2021; Rothblum et al., 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) emphasizes sexual health depends on respect for the sexual rights of all people, including the right to express diverse sexualities and to be treated respectfully, safely, and with freedom from discrimination and violence. Sexual health discourses have focused on agency and body autonomy, which include consent, sexual pleasure, sexual satisfaction, partnerships, and family life (Cornwall & Jolly, 2006; Lindley et al., 2021). In light of this, the WHO defines sexual health as “a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be

attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected, and fulfilled” (WHO, 2006, p. 5). This includes individuals on the asexual spectrum, who may not experience sexual attraction to others but may still choose to be sexual at times (e.g., via self-stimulation) and/or experience interest in forming and building romantic relationships (de Oliveira et al., 2021).

Scientific attention to the sexual experiences and behaviors of TGD people has grown in recent years (Gieles et al., 2022; Holmberg et al., 2019; Klein & Gorzalka, 2009; Kloer et al., 2021; Mattawanon et al., 2021; Stephenson et al., 2017; Tirapegui et al., 2020; Thurston & Allan, 2018). This expansion within the literature reflects a sex-positive framework (Harden, 2014), a framework that recognizes both the positive aspects such as sexual pleasure (Laan et al., 2021) and potential risks associated with sexuality (Goldhammer et al., 2022; Mujugira et al., 2021). Studies of TGD people's sexuality, however, often lack validated measures, an appropriate control group, or a prospective design (Holmberg et al., 2019). Additionally, most focus exclusively on sexual functioning (Kennis et al., 2022), and thus neglecting sexual satisfaction and broader operationalizations of sexual pleasure beyond functioning. The effects of current TGD-related medical treatments on sexuality are heterogeneous (Özer et al., 2022; T'Sjoen et al., 2020), and there has been little research on the sexuality of TGD adolescents (Bungener et al., 2017; Maheux et al., 2021; Ristori et al., 2021; Stübler & Becker-Hebly, 2019; Warwick et al., 2022). While sex-positive approaches to counseling and treatment for sexual difficulties experienced by TGD individuals have been proposed (Fielding, 2021; Jacobson et al., 2019; Richards, 2021), to date there is insufficient research on the effectiveness of such interventions. Focusing on the promotion of sexual health, the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) asserts the importance of sexual pleasure and considers self-determination, consent, safety, privacy, confidence, and the ability to communicate and negotiate sexual relations as major facilitators (Kismödi et al., 2017). WAS asserts sexual pleasure is integral to sexual rights and human rights (Kismödi et al., 2017). To contribute to

Statements of Recommendations

17.1- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people acquire the knowledge and skills needed to address sexual health issues (relevant to their care provision).

17.2- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people discuss the impact of gender-affirming treatments on sexual function, pleasure, and satisfaction.

17.3- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people offer the possibility of including the partner(s) in sexuality-related care, if appropriate.

17.4- We recommend health care professionals counsel transgender and gender diverse people about the potential impact of stigma and trauma on sexual risk behavior, sexual avoidance, and sexual functioning.

17.5- We recommend any health care professional who offers care that may impact sexual health provide information, ask about the expectations of the transgender and gender diverse individual and assess their level of understanding of possible changes.

17.6- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people counsel adolescents and adults regarding prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

17.7- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people follow local and World Health Organization guidelines for human immunodeficiency virus/sexual transmitted infections (HIV/STIs) screening, prevention, and treatment.

17.8- We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people address concerns about potential interactions between antiretroviral medications and hormones.

the sexual health of TGD people, health care professionals (HCPs) need both transgender-related expertise and sensitivity (Nieder, Gldenring et al., 2020). With the goal of improving sexual health care for TGD people to an ethically-sound, evidence-based and high-quality level, HCPs must provide their health services with the same care (i.e., with transgender-related expertise), respect (i.e., with transgender-related sensitivity), and investment in sexual pleasure and sexual satisfaction as they provide for cisgender people (Holmberg et al., 2019).

In many societies, nonconforming gender expressions can elicit strong (emotional) reactions, including in HCPs. Thus, when initiating a health-related contact or establishing a therapeutic relationship, a nonjudgmental, open and welcoming manner is most likely ensured when HCPs reflect on their emotional, cognitive, and interactional reactions to the person (Nieder, Gldenring et al., 2020). In addition, transgender-related expertise refers to identifying the impact the TGD person's intersectional identities and experiences of marginalization and stigma may have had on their whole self (Rider, Vencill et al., 2019). To adequately address the specific physical, psychological, and social conditions of TGD people, HCPs must be aware these conditions are generally overlooked due to hetero-cis-normativity, lack of knowledge, and lack of skills (Rees et al., 2021). It is also important to consider cultural norms in relation to sexuality. For example, in some African cultures, the

idea of sex as taboo restricts the number of acceptable terms to be used when taking a sexual history (Netshandama et al., 2017). Culturally respectful language can facilitate talking openly about one's sexual history and reduce ambiguity or shame (Duby et al., 2016). In addition, HCPs must be sensitive to the history of (mis)use of sexual identity and orientation as a gatekeeping function to exclude transgender people from gender-affirming health care (Nieder & Richter-Appelt, 2011; Richards et al., 2014). The following recommendations aim to improve sexual health care for TGD people.

All the statements in this chapter have been recommended based on a thorough review of evidence, an assessment of the benefits and harms, values and preferences of providers and patients, and resource use and feasibility. In some cases, we recognize evidence is limited and/or services may not be accessible or desirable.

Statement 17.1

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people acquire the knowledge and skills to address sexual health issues (relevant to their care provision).

It is important HCPs addressing the sexual health of TGD people be familiar with commonly used terminology (see Chapter 1—Terminology) and invite those seeking care to explain terms with which the provider may not be familiar. In this context, it is also important HCPs (are

prepared to) take a sexual history and offer treatment (according to their competencies) in a gender-affirming way with a sex-positive approach (Centers for Disease Control, 2020; Tomson et al., 2021). However, HCPs should apply greater importance to the terminology that the TGD person uses for their own body over more traditionally accepted or used medical terminology (Wesp, 2016). When talking about sexual practices, it is advisable to focus on body parts (e.g., “Do you have sex with people with a penis, people with a vagina, or both?”; ACON, 2022) and what role they play in their sexuality (e.g., “During Sex, do any parts of your body enter your partners body, such as their genitals, anus, or mouth?”; ACON, 2022).

Statement 17.2

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people discuss the impact of gender-affirming treatments on sexual function, pleasure, and satisfaction.

To achieve gender-affirming care, it is crucial HCPs providing transition-related medical interventions be sufficiently informed about the possible effects on sexual function, pleasure, and satisfaction (T'Sjoen et al., 2020). Since clinical data indicate that TGD people score significantly lower in sexual pleasure compared to cisgender individuals, this is even more important (Gieles et al., 2022). If the HCP cannot provide information about the effects of their treatment on sexual function, pleasure, and satisfaction, they are at least expected to refer the individual to someone qualified to do so. If the sexuality-related effects of their treatment are unknown, HCPs should inform their patients accordingly. As introduced above, the sexuality of TGD people often challenges heteronormative views. Nevertheless, there is a large amount of literature (e.g., Bauer, 2018; Laube et al., 2020; Hamm & Nieder, 2021; Stephenson et al., 2017) highlighting the spectrum character of sexuality that does not fit into expectations of what male and female sexuality entails (neither cis- nor transgender), let alone that of gender diverse people (e.g., non-binary, agender, genderqueer). Thus, these aspects should be carefully considered by HCPs as

cisnormativity, heteronormativity, and transition-related medical interventions, all have a strong impact on sexual health.

Sexual pleasure has been well documented as a factor in improving sexual, mental, and physical health outcomes (Anderson, 2013). Next to sexual function, HCPs providing sexual health care must address sexual pleasure and satisfaction as a key factor within sexual health. Historically sexual health care has been disease focused, and this is particularly true for research and clinical practice in working with TGD patients. Although competent sexual health care regarding HIV and STIs is necessary, integration of valuing sexual pleasure of TGD patients is also necessary. Calls for integrating sexual pleasure as a focal point in STI prevention education and interventions rest on the understanding that pleasure is a motivator of behavior (Philpott et al., 2006). TGD people are concerned about their sexual pleasure and need HCPs who are knowledgeable about the diversity of sexual practices and anatomical functioning particular to TGD health care.

Statement 17.3

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people offer the possibility of including the partner(s) in sexuality-related care, if appropriate.

When appropriate and relevant to clinical concerns, inclusion of a sexual and/or romantic partner(s) in sexual health care decision-making can increase TGD patients' sexual well-being and satisfaction outcomes (Kleinplatz, 2012). TGD people may choose a range of transition-related medical interventions, and these interventions may have mixed results in shifting experiences of anatomical dysphoria (Bauer & Hammond, 2015). When discussing the impact of medical interventions on sexual functioning, pleasure, and satisfaction, inclusion of partner(s) can increase knowledge of potential changes and encourage communication between partners (Dierckx et al., 2019). Because the process of transitioning is often not a completely solitary endeavor, the inclusion of sexual and/or romantic partners in transition-related health care can facilitate the process of “co-transitioning” (Lindley et al., 2020;

Siboni et al., 2022; Theron & Collier, 2013) and can also support sexual growth and adjustment both in the individual as well as in the relationship. Social and psychological barriers to sexual functioning and pleasure, including experiences of gender dysphoria, stigmatization, lack of sexual and relationship role models, and limited skills, can have negative impacts on overall sexual health (Kerckhof et al., 2019). Supportive, gender-affirming sexual communication between partners improves sexual satisfaction outcomes for TGD people (Stephenson et al., 2017; Wierckx, Elaut et al., 2011).

Inclusion of sexual and/or romantic partners offers an additional opportunity to set realistic expectations, disseminate helpful and accurate information, and facilitate gender-affirming positive communication related to sexual health. Ultimately, however, it is important to recognize individual choices related to gender health and transition are the patients to make, not a partner's decision. It is important the inclusion of partners in sexual health-related care occur only when appropriate and as desired by patients. Contraindications might include interpersonal dynamics that are abusive or violent, in which case patient safety overrides partner involvement. Finally, it is critical HCPs treat all people in an affirming and inclusive manner, including sexual and romantic partners. This means, for example, monitoring and addressing assumptions and potential biases about the gender or sexual orientation of a patient's partner(s) or a patient's relationship structure.

Statement 17.4

We recommend health care professionals counsel transgender and gender diverse people about the potential impact of stigma and trauma on sexual risk behavior, sexual avoidance, and sexual functioning.

The TGD community is disproportionately impacted by stigma, discrimination, and violence (de Vries et al., 2020; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020; McLachlan, 2019). These experiences are often traumatic in nature (Burnes et al., 2016; Mizock & Lewis, 2008) and can create barriers to sexual health, functioning, and pleasure (Bauer & Hammond, 2015). For example, stigmatizing narratives about

transgender sexualities can increase dysphoria and sexual shame, increasing potential avoidance of the sexual communication needed for safety and optimizing pleasure (Stephenson et al., 2017). Research demonstrates stigma, a history of sexual violence, and body image concerns can negatively impact sexual self-esteem and agency, for example the ability to assert what is pleasurable or to negotiate condom use (Clements-Nolle et al., 2008; Dharma et al., 2019). Additionally, gender dysphoria can be exacerbated by past trauma experiences and ongoing trauma-related symptoms (Giovanardi et al., 2018). It may be difficult for some TGD individuals to engage sexually using the genitals with which they were born, and they may choose to avoid such stimulation altogether, disrupting arousal and/or orgasmic processes (Anzani et al., 2021; Bauer & Hammond, 2015; Iantaffi & Bockting, 2011) or result in complex feelings about orgasm (Chadwick et al., 2019). HCPs providing gender-affirming counseling and interventions must be knowledgeable about the spectrum of sexual orientations and identities (including asexual identities and practices) to avoid assumptions based in heteronormative, cisnormative, allonormative modes of behavior or satisfaction while also affirming the potential impacts of stigma and trauma on sexual health and pleasure (Nieder, Guldenring et al., 2020). Some level of disconnect or dissociation may at times be present, particularly in the case of acute trauma symptoms (Colizzi et al., 2015). It is important HCPs be aware of these potential impacts on sexual health, functioning, pleasure, and satisfaction, so they may refer patients as needed to trauma-informed sexual counselors, mental health providers, or both, who may be of further assistance and may also normalize and validate TGD patients exploring multiple diverse pathways of healing and accessing sexual pleasure.

Statement 17.5

We recommend any health care professional who offers care that may impact sexual health provide information, ask about the expectation of the transgender and gender diverse individual, and assess their level of understanding of possible changes.

Transition-related care can affect sexual function, pleasure, and satisfaction, both in positive and negative ways (Holmberg et al., 2018; Kerckhof et al., 2019; Thurston & Allan, 2018; Tirapegui et al., 2020). On the positive side, gender-affirming care can help TGD people improve their sexual functioning and increase their sexual pleasure and satisfaction (Kloer et al., 2021; Özer et al., 2022; T'Sjoen et al., 2020). On the negative side, however, data indicate problematic sexual health outcomes due to hormonal and surgical treatments (Holmberg et al., 2018; Kerckhof et al., 2019; Stephenson et al., 2017; Weyers et al., 2009). Transition-related hormones may affect mood, sexual desire, the ability to have an erection and ejaculation, and genital tissue health, which in turn can impact sexual function, pleasure and sexual self-expression (Defreyne, Elaut et al., 2020; Garcia & Zaliznyak, 2020; Kerckhof et al., 2019; Klein & Gorzalka, 2009; Wierckx, Elaut et al., 2014). TGD people who wish to use their original genital anatomy for penetrative sex may benefit from medications that address sexual health side effects of hormone therapy, such as erectile dysfunction, medications for TGD persons taking estrogen or antiandrogens, and topical estrogen and/or moisturizers for TGD persons experiencing vaginal atrophy or dryness due to testosterone therapy.

Sexual desire, arousal, and function may also be affected by the use of psychotropic drugs (Montejo et al., 2015). As some TGD people are prescribed medication to treat depression (Heylens, Elaut et al., 2014), anxiety (Millet et al., 2017) or other mental health concerns (Dhejne et al., 2016), their potential side effects on sexual health should be considered.

Many gender-affirming surgeries can have significant effects on erogenous sensation, sexual desire and arousal as well as sexual function and pleasure. The impact of these changes for patients may be mixed (Holmberg et al., 2018). Chest surgeries (breast reduction, mastectomy, and breast augmentation) and body contouring surgeries, for example, may offer desired changes in form and appearance thereby reducing psychological distress that can disrupt sexual functioning but may adversely affect erogenous sensation (Bekeny et al., 2020; Claes et al., 2018; Rochlin

et al., 2020). Genital surgeries in particular can potentially affect sexual function and pleasure in adverse ways, although they are likely to be experienced positively as the patient's body becomes more aligned with their gender, potentially opening new avenues for sexual pleasure and satisfaction (Hess et al., 2018; Holmberg et al., 2018; Kerckhof et al., 2019).

There are numerous examples of this in the extant literature:

- Surgery may result in a decrease, a total loss, or a possible increase in erogenous stimulation and/or experienced sensation compared with the patient's presurgery anatomy (Garcia, 2018; Sigurjónsson et al., 2017).
- A particular surgical option may be associated with specific limitations to sexual function that may manifest immediately, in the future, or at both timepoints, and which patients should consider before finalizing their choice when considering different surgical options (Frey et al., 2016; Garcia, 2018; Isaacson et al., 2017).
- Postsurgical complications can adversely affect sexual function by either decreasing the quality of sexual function (e.g., discomfort or pain with sexual activity) or by precluding satisfactory intercourse (Kerckhof et al., 2019; Schardein et al., 2019).

In general, satisfaction with any medical treatment is heavily influenced by the patient's expectations (Padilla et al., 2019). Furthermore, when patients have unrealistic expectations before treatment, they are much more likely to be dissatisfied with the outcome, their care, and with their HCP (Padilla et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to both provide patients with adequate information about their treatment options and to understand and consider what is important to the patient with regard to outcomes (Garcia, 2021). Finally, it is important the HCP ensure patients understand the potential adverse effects of a treatment on their sexual function and pleasure so that a well-informed decision can be made. This is relevant for both meeting the standard of informed consent (i.e.,

discussion and understanding) and for providing an opportunity to offer further clarification to patients and, if desired, to their partners (Glaser et al., 2020).

Statement 17.6

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people counsel adolescents and adults regarding prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

The WHO (2015) recommends HCPs implement brief sexuality-related communication in primary care for all adolescents and adults. Therefore, TGD persons who are sexually active or considering sexual activity may benefit from sexuality-related communication or counseling for the purpose of HIV/STI prevention. These conversations are particularly important as TGD persons are disproportionately impacted by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) relative to cisgender persons (Baral et al., 2013; Becasen et al., 2018; Poteat et al., 2016). However, few data are available for non-HIV STIs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, viral hepatitis, and herpes simplex virus (Tomson et al., 2021). The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates transgender women are 12 times more likely than other adults to be living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2019). A meta-analysis estimated a pooled global HIV prevalence of 19% among transgender women who have sex with men (Baral et al., 2013). HIV/STI risk is concentrated among TGD subgroups at the confluence of multiple biological, psychological, interpersonal, and structural vulnerabilities. In particular, transfeminine persons who have sex with cisgender men, belong to minoritized racial/ethnic groups, live in poverty, and engage in survival sex work are at elevated HIV/STI risk (Becasen et al., 2018; Poteat et al., 2015; Poteat et al., 2016). Less is known about HIV/STI risk among transgender men or gender diverse persons AFAB. Small studies in high-income countries indicate a laboratory-confirmed HIV prevalence of 0-4% among transmasculine people (Becasen et al., 2018; Reisner & Murchison, 2016). Almost no research has been conducted with transmasculine people who have sex with cisgender men in

high-HIV-prevalence countries. Despite limited epidemiologic data, transmasculine persons who have sex with cisgender men frequently report HIV/STI risk related to receptive vaginal and/or anal sex (Golub et al., 2019; Reisner et al., 2019; Scheim et al., 2017) and may be more susceptible to HIV acquisition from vaginal intercourse than (pre-menopausal) cisgender women due to hormone-related vaginal atrophy.

HCPs will need to supplement general guidelines by developing the knowledge and skills needed for discussing sexual health issues with TGD people, such as the use of gender-affirming language (see Statement 17.1 in this chapter). It is critical HCPs avoid assumptions about HIV/STI risk based solely on a patient's gender identity or anatomy. For example, many transgender people are not sexually active, and TGD persons may use prosthetics or toys for sex. To provide appropriate prevention counseling, HCPs should inquire about the specific sexual activities TGD people engage in, and the body parts (or prosthetics) involved in those activities (ACON, 2022). Well-prepared HCPs (including, but not limited to mental health providers) may also engage in in-depth counseling with their patients to address the underlying drivers of HIV/STI risk (see Statement 17.3 in this chapter).

In all cases, HCPs should be sensitive to the collective and individual histories of TGD people (e.g., stereotypes and stigma about trans sexualities and gender dysphoria) and should explain to patients the reasons for sexuality-related inquiries and the voluntary nature of such inquiries. In discussing HIV/STI prevention, HCPs should refer to the full range of prevention options including barrier methods, post-exposure prophylaxis, pre-exposure prophylaxis, and HIV treatment to prevent onwards transmission (WHO, 2021). Trans-specific considerations for pre-exposure prophylaxis are addressed in Statement 17.8.

Statement 17.7

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people follow local and World Health Organization guidelines for human immunodeficiency virus/sexual transmitted infections (HIV/STIs) screening, prevention, and treatment.

Like cisgender patients, TGD adolescents and adults should be offered screening for HIV/STIs in accordance with existing guidelines and based on their individual risk of HIV/STI acquisition, considering anatomy and behavior rather than gender identity alone. Where local or national guidelines are unavailable, WHO (2019a) offers global recommendations; more frequent screening is recommended for transgender people who have sex with cisgender men as a key population affected by HIV.

Gender-affirming genital surgeries and surgical techniques have implications for STI risks and screening needs, as outlined in recent guidelines from the US Centers for Disease Control (Workowski et al., 2021). For instance, transfeminine persons who have had penile inversion vaginoplasty using only penile and scrotal skin to line the vaginal canal are likely at lower risk of urogenital *Chlamydia trachomatis* (*C. trachomatis*) and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (*N. gonorrhoeae*), but newer surgical techniques that employ buccal or urethral mucosa or peritoneum flaps could in theory increase susceptibility to bacterial STIs relative to the use of penile/scrotal skin alone (Van Gerwen et al., 2021). Routine STI screening of the neovagina (if exposed) is recommended for all transfeminine persons who have had vaginoplasty (Workowski et al., 2021). For transmasculine persons who have had metoidioplasty with urethral lengthening, but not vaginectomy, testing for bacterial urogenital STIs should include a cervical swab because infections may not be detected in urine (Workowski et al., 2021).

Further, it is important for HCPs to offer testing at multiple anatomical sites as STIs in transgender patients are often extragenital (Hiransuthikul et al., 2019; Pitasi et al., 2019). Consistent with WHO (2020) recommendations, self-collection of samples for STI testing should be offered as an option, particularly if patients are uncomfortable or unwilling to undergo provider-collected sampling due to gender dysphoria, trauma histories, or both. Where relevant, integration of HIV/STI testing with regular serology used to monitor hormone therapy may better facilitate access to care (Reisner, Radix et al., 2016; Scheim & Travers, 2017).

Statement 17.8

We recommend health care professionals who provide care to transgender and gender diverse people address concerns about potential interactions between antiretroviral medications and hormones.

For TGD adolescents and adults at substantial risk of HIV infection (generally defined as an ongoing serodiscordant relationship or condomless sex outside of a mutually monogamous relationship with a known HIV-negative partner; WHO, 2017), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an important HIV prevention option (Golub et al., 2019; Sevelius et al., 2016; WHO, 2021). To encourage uptake of PrEP, in 2021 the US Centers for Disease Control recommended all sexually active adolescents and adults be informed about PrEP and offered it if requested (CDC, 2021). For treatment among people living with HIV, transgender-specific guidelines are available in some settings (e.g., Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, 2019).

For both HIV prevention and treatment, there are antiretroviral dosing and administration considerations specific to TGD persons. For oral PrEP, only daily dosing is currently recommended for TGD persons as studies demonstrating the effectiveness of event-driven PrEP with emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) have been limited to cisgender men (WHO, 2019c). In addition, while emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) is a new oral PrEP option, as of early 2022 it is not recommended for people at risk of HIV acquisition through receptive vaginal sex due to a lack of evidence (CDC, 2021). Finally, long-acting injectable formulations of both PrEP and HIV treatment are increasingly available (e.g., cabotegravir for PrEP), and while they are recommended for all patients who might benefit from injectable options, indicated injection sites (i.e., the gluteal muscle) may be unsuitable for individuals who have used soft tissue fillers (Rael et al., 2020).

There is little evidence supporting the occurrence of drug-drug interactions between gender-affirming hormones and PrEP medications. A few small studies, primarily relying on self-reported PrEP use, have shown reduced PrEP drug concentrations in transgender women undergoing hormone therapy, although

concentrations remained in the protective range (Yager & Anderson, 2020). A subsequent drug-drug interaction study using directly observed PrEP therapy failed to detect an impact of hormone therapy on PrEP drug concentrations in transgender women and found transgender women and men taking hormone therapy achieved high levels of protection against HIV infection (Grant et al., 2020). Most importantly, for many TGD people, no impact of PrEP on hormone concentrations has been detected. With regard to HIV treatment, specific antiretroviral medications may impact hormone concentrations; however, these can be managed by selecting alternative agents, monitoring and adjusting hormone dosing, or both (Cirrincione et al., 2020) as detailed in guidelines from the US Department of Health and Human Services (Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, 2019). Nevertheless, concerns

about drug-drug interactions, particularly interactions that may limit hormone concentrations, represent a barrier to the implementation and adherence to antiretroviral therapy for HIV prevention or treatment (Radix et al., 2020; Sevelius et al., 2016). Therefore, it is advisable for HCPs to proactively address such concerns with those who are candidates for PrEP or HIV treatment. Integration of PrEP or HIV treatment with hormone therapy may further reduce barriers to implementation and adherence (Reisner, Radix et al., 2016). Integration may be achieved through colocation or through coordination with an HIV specialist if the primary care provider does not have the necessary expertise. Some TGD persons may benefit from standalone PrEP or sexual health services that provide greater privacy and flexibility, and thus differentiated service delivery models are needed (Wilson et al., 2021).

CHAPTER 18 Mental Health

This chapter is intended to provide guidance to health care professionals (HCPs) and mental health professionals (MHPs) who offer mental health care to transgender and gender diverse (TGD) adults. It is not meant to be a substitute for chapters on the assessment or evaluation of people for hormonal or surgical interventions. Many TGD people will not require therapy or other forms of mental health care as part of their transition, while others may benefit from the support of mental health providers and systems (Dhejne et al., 2016).

Some studies have shown a higher prevalence of depression (Witcomb et al., 2018), anxiety (Bouman et al., 2017), and suicidality (Arcelus et al., 2016; Bränström & Pachankis, 2022; Davey et al., 2016; Dhejne, 2011; Herman et al., 2019) among TGD people (Jones et al., 2019; Thorne, Witcomb et al., 2019) than in the general population, particularly in those requiring medically necessary gender-affirming medical treatment (see medically necessary statement in Chapter 2—Global Applicability, Statement 2.1). However, transgender identity is not a mental illness, and these elevated rates have been linked to complex trauma, societal stigma, violence, and discrimination (Nuttbrock

et al., 2014; Peterson et al., 2021). In addition, psychiatric symptoms lessen with appropriate gender-affirming medical and surgical care (Aldridge et al., 2020; Almazan and Keuroghlian, 2021; Bauer et al., 2015; Grannis et al., 2021) and with interventions that lessen discrimination and minority stress (Bauer et al., 2015; Heylens, Verroken et al., 2014; McDowell et al., 2020).

Mental health treatment needs to be provided by staff and implemented through the use of systems that respect patient autonomy and recognize gender diversity. MHPs working with transgender people should use active listening as a method to encourage exploration in individuals who are uncertain about their gender identity. Rather than impose their own narratives or preconceptions, MHPs should assist their clients in determining their own paths. While many transgender people require medical or surgical interventions or seek mental health care, others do not (Margulies et al., 2021). Therefore, findings from research involving clinical populations should not be extrapolated to the entire transgender population.

Addressing mental illness and substance use disorders is important but should not be a barrier to transition-related care. Rather, these interventions to address mental health and substance use disorders can facilitate successful outcomes from

Statements of Recommendations

18.1- We recommend mental health professionals address mental health symptoms that interfere with a person's capacity to consent to gender-affirming treatment before gender-affirming treatment is initiated.

18.2- We recommend mental health professionals offer care and support to transgender and gender diverse people to address mental health symptoms that interfere with a person's capacity to participate in essential perioperative care before gender-affirmation surgery.

18.3- We recommend when significant mental health symptoms or substance abuse exists, mental health professionals assess the potential negative impact that mental health symptoms may have on outcomes based on the nature of the specific gender-affirming surgical procedure.

18.4- We recommend health care professionals assess the need for psychosocial and practical support of transgender and gender diverse people in the perioperative period surrounding gender-affirmation surgery.

18.5- We recommend health care professionals counsel and assist transgender and gender diverse people in becoming abstinent from tobacco/nicotine prior to gender-affirmation surgery.

18.6- We recommend health care professionals maintain existing hormone treatment if a transgender and gender diverse individual requires admission to a psychiatric or medical inpatient unit, unless contraindicated.

18.7- We recommend health care professionals ensure if transgender and gender diverse people need in-patient or residential mental health, substance abuse or medical care, all staff use the correct name and pronouns (as provided by the patient), as well as provide access to bathroom and sleeping arrangements that are aligned with the person's gender identity.

18.8- We recommend mental health professionals encourage, support, and empower transgender and gender diverse people to develop and maintain social support systems, including peers, friends, and families.

18.9- We recommend health care professionals should not make it mandatory for transgender and gender diverse people to undergo psychotherapy prior to the initiation of gender-affirming treatment, while acknowledging psychotherapy may be helpful for some transgender and gender diverse people.

18.10- We recommend "reparative" and "conversion" therapy aimed at trying to change a person's gender identity and lived gender expression to become more congruent with the sex assigned at birth should not be offered.

transition-related care, which can improve quality of life (Nobili et al., 2018).

All the statements in this chapter have been recommended based on a thorough review of evidence, an assessment of the benefits and harms, values and preferences of providers and patients, and resource use and feasibility. In some cases, we recognize evidence is limited and/or services may not be accessible or desirable.

Statement 18.1

We recommend mental health professionals address mental health symptoms that interfere with a person's capacity to consent to gender-affirming treatment before gender-affirming treatment is initiated.

Because patients generally are assumed to be capable of providing consent for care, whether the presence of cognitive impairment, psychosis, or other mental illness impairs the ability to give informed consent is subject to individual examination (Applebaum, 2007). Informed consent is central to the provision of health care. The health care provider must educate the patient about the risks, benefits, and alternatives to any care that is offered so the patient can make an informed, voluntary choice (Berg et al., 2001). Both the primary care provider or endocrinologist prescribing hormones and the surgeon performing surgery must obtain informed consent. Similarly, MHPs obtain informed consent for mental health treatment and may consult on a patient's capacity to give informed consent when this is in question. Psychiatric illness and substance use disorders, in particular cognitive impairment and psychosis, may impair an individual's ability to understand the risks and benefits of the treatment (Hostiuc et al., 2018). Conversely, a patient may also have significant mental illness, yet still be able to understand the risks and benefits of a particular treatment (Carpenter et al., 2000). Multidisciplinary communication is important in challenging cases, and expert consultation should be utilized as needed (Karasic & Fraser, 2018). For many patients, difficulty understanding the risks and benefits of a particular treatment can be overcome with time and careful explanation. For some patients, treatment of the underlying condition that is interfering with the capacity to

give informed consent—for example treating an underlying psychosis—will allow the patient to gain the capacity to consent to the required treatment. However, mental health symptoms such as anxiety or depressive symptoms that do not affect the capacity to give consent should not be a barrier for gender-affirming medical treatment, particularly as this treatment has been found to reduce mental health symptomatology (Aldridge et al., 2020).

Statement 18.2

We recommend mental health professionals offer care and support to transgender and gender diverse people to address mental health symptoms that interfere with a person's capacity to participate in essential perioperative care before gender-affirmation surgery.

The inability to adequately participate in perioperative care due to mental illness or substance use should not be viewed as an obstacle to needed transition care, but should be seen as an indication mental health care and social support be provided (Karasic, 2020). Mental illness and substance use disorders may impair the ability of the patient to participate in perioperative care (Barnhill, 2014). Visits to health care providers, wound care, and other aftercare procedures (e.g., dilation after vaginoplasty) may be necessary for a good outcome. A patient with a substance use disorder might have difficulty keeping necessary appointments to the primary care provider and the surgeon. A patient with psychosis or severe depression might neglect their wound or not be attentive to infection or signs of dehiscence (Lee, Marsh et al., 2016). Active mental illness is associated with a greater need for further acute medical and surgical care after the initial surgery (Wimalawansa et al., 2014).

In these cases, treatment of the mental illness or substance use disorder may assist in achieving successful outcomes. Arranging more support for the patient from family and friends or a home health care worker may help the patient participate sufficiently in perioperative care for surgery to proceed. The benefits of mental health treatments that may delay surgery should be weighed against the risks of delaying surgery and should

include an assessment of the impact on the patients' mental health delays may cause in addressing gender dysphoria (Byne et al., 2018).

Statement 18.3

We recommend when significant mental health symptoms or substance abuse exists, mental health professionals assess the potential negative impact mental health symptoms may have on outcomes based on the nature of the specific gender-affirming surgical procedure.

Gender-affirming surgical procedures vary in terms of their impact on the patient. Some procedures require a greater ability to follow preoperative planning as well as engage in peri- and postoperative care to achieve the best outcomes (Tollinche et al., 2018). Mental health symptoms can influence a patient's ability to participate in the planning and perioperative care necessary for any surgical procedure (Paredes et al., 2020). The mental health assessment can provide an opportunity to develop strategies to address the potential negative impact mental health symptoms may have on outcomes and to plan support for the patient's ability to participate in the planning and care. Gender-affirming surgical procedures have been shown to relieve symptoms of gender dysphoria and improve mental health (Owen-Smith et al., 2018; van de Grift, Elaut et al., 2017). These benefits are weighed against the risks of each procedure when the patient and provider are deciding whether to proceed with the treatment. HCPs can assist TGD people in reviewing preplanning and perioperative care instructions for each surgical procedure (Karasic, 2020). Provider and patient can collaboratively determine the necessary support or resources needed to assist with keeping appointments for perioperative care, obtaining necessary supplies, addressing financial issues, and handling other preoperative coordination and planning. In addition, issues surrounding appearance-related and functional expectations, including the impact of these various factors on gender dysphoria, can be explored.

Statement 18.4

We recommend health care professionals assess the need for psychosocial and practical support

of transgender and gender diverse people in the perioperative period surrounding gender-affirmation surgery.

Regardless of specialty, all HCPs have a responsibility to support patients in accessing medically necessary care. When HCPs are working with TGD people as they prepare for gender-affirming surgical procedures, they should assess the levels of psychosocial and practical support required (Deutsch, 2016b). Assessment is the first step in recognizing where additional support may be needed and enhancing the ability to work collaboratively with the individual to successfully navigate the pre-, peri-, and postsurgical periods (Tollinche et al., 2018). In the perioperative period, it is important to help patients optimize functioning, secure stable housing, when possible, build social and family supports by assessing their unique situation, plan ways of responding to medical complications, navigate the potential impact on work/income, and overcome additional hurdles some patients may encounter, such as coping with electrolysis and tobacco cessation (Berli et al., 2017). In a complex medical system, not all patients will be able to independently navigate the procedures required to obtain care, and HCPs and peer navigators can support patients through this process (Deutsch, 2016a).

Statement 18.5

We recommend health care professionals counsel and assist transgender and gender diverse people in becoming abstinent from tobacco/nicotine prior to gender-affirmation surgery.

Transgender populations have higher rates of tobacco and nicotine use (Kidd et al., 2018). However, many are unaware of the well-documented smoking-associated health risks (Bryant et al., 2014). Tobacco consumption increases the risk of developing health problems (e.g., thrombosis) in individuals receiving gender-affirming hormone treatment, particularly estrogens (Chipkin & Kim, 2017).

Tobacco use has been associated with worse outcomes in plastic surgery, including overall complications, tissue necrosis, and the need for surgical revision (Coon et al., 2013). Smoking also increases the risk for postoperative infection (Kaoutzanis et al., 2019). Tobacco use has been shown to affect

the healing process following any surgery, including gender-related surgeries (e.g., chest reconstructive surgery, genital surgery) (Pluvy, Garrido et al., 2015). Tobacco users have a higher risk of cutaneous necrosis, delayed wound healing, and scarring disorders due to hypoxia and tissue ischemia (Pluvy, Panouilleres et al., 2015). In view of this, surgeons recommend stopping the use of tobacco/nicotine prior to gender-affirmation surgery and abstaining from smoking up to several weeks post-operatively until the wound has completely healed (Matei & Danino, 2015). Despite the risks, cessation may be difficult. Tobacco smoking and nicotine use is addictive and is also used as a coping mechanism (Matei et al., 2015). HCPs who see patients longitudinally before surgery, including mental health and primary care providers, should address the use of tobacco/nicotine with individuals in their care, and either assist TGD people in accessing smoking cessation programs or provide treatment directly (e.g., varenicline or bupropion).

Statement 18.6

We recommend health care professionals maintain existing hormone treatment if a transgender and gender diverse individual requires admission to a psychiatric or medical inpatient unit, unless contraindicated.

TGD people entering inpatient psychiatric, substance use treatment, or medical units should be maintained on their current hormone regimens. There is an absence of evidence supporting routine cessation of hormones prior to medical or psychiatric admissions. Rarely, a newly admitted patient may be diagnosed with a medical complication necessitating suspension of hormone treatment, for example an acute venous thromboembolism (Deutsch, 2016a). There is no strong evidence for routinely stopping hormone treatment prior to surgery, and the risks and benefits for each individual patient should be assessed before doing so (Boskey et al., 2018).

Hormone treatment has been shown to improve quality of life and to decrease depression and anxiety (Aldridge et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2018; Nobili et al., 2018; Owen-Smith et al., 2018; Rowniak et al., 2019). Access to gender-affirming medical treatment is associated with a substantial reduction in the risk of suicide attempt (Bauer

et al., 2015). Halting a patient's regularly prescribed hormones denies the patient of these salutary effects, and therefore may be counter to the goals of hospitalization.

Some providers may be unaware of the low risk of harm and the high potential benefit of continuing transition-related treatment in the inpatient setting. A study of US and Canadian medical schools revealed that students received an average of 5 hours of LGBT-related course content over their entire four years of education (Obedin-Maliver et al., 2011). According to a survey of Emergency Medicine physicians, who are often responsible for making quick decisions about medications as patients are being admitted, while 88% reported caring for transgender patients, only 17.5% had received any formal training about this population (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018). As education about transgender topics increases, more providers will become aware of the importance of maintaining transgender patients on their hormone regimens during hospitalization.

Statement 18.7

We recommend health care professionals ensure if transgender and gender diverse people need inpatient or residential mental health, substance abuse, or medical care, all staff use the correct name and pronouns (as provided by the patient), as well as provide access to bathroom and sleeping arrangements that are aligned with the person's gender identity.

Many TGD patients encounter discrimination in a wide range of health settings, including hospitals, mental health treatment settings, and drug treatment programs (Grant et al., 2011). When health systems fail to accommodate TGD individuals, they reinforce the longstanding societal exclusion many have experienced (Karasic, 2016). Experiences of discrimination in health settings lead to avoidance of needed health care due to anticipated discrimination (Kcomt et al., 2020).

The experience of discrimination experienced by TGD individuals is predictive of suicidal ideation (Rood et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2021). Gender minority stress associated with rejection and nonaffirmation has also been associated with suicidality (Testa et al., 2017). Denial of access to gender appropriate bathrooms has been

associated with increased suicidality (Seelman, 2016). However, the use of chosen names for TGD people has been associated with lower depression and suicidality (Russell et al., 2018). Structural as well as internalized transphobia must be addressed to reduce the incidence of suicide attempts in TGD people (Brumer et al., 2015). To successfully provide care, health settings must minimize the harm done to patients because of transphobia by respecting and accommodating TGD identities.

Statement 18.8

We recommend mental health professionals encourage, support, and empower transgender and gender diverse people to develop and maintain social support systems, including peers, friends, and families.

While minority stress and the direct effects of discriminatory societal discrimination can be harmful to the mental health of TGD people, strong social support can help lessen this harm (Trujillo et al., 2017). TGD children often internalize rejection from family and peers as well as the transphobia that surrounds them (Amodeo et al., 2015). Furthermore, exposure to transphobic abuse may be impactful across a person's lifespan and may be particularly acute during the adolescent years (Nuttbrock et al., 2010).

The development of affirming social support is protective of mental health. Social support can act as a buffer against the adverse mental health consequences of violence, stigma, and discrimination (Bockting et al., 2013), can assist in navigating health systems (Jackson Levin et al., 2020), and can contribute to psychological resilience in TGD people (Bariola et al., 2015; Başar and Öz, 2016). Diverse sources of social support, especially LGBTQ+ peers and family, have been found to be associated with better mental health outcomes, well-being, and quality of life (Bariola et al., 2015; Başar et al., 2016; Kuper, Adams et al., 2018; Puckett et al., 2019). Social support has been proposed to facilitate the development of coping mechanisms and lead to positive emotional experiences throughout the transition process (Budge et al., 2013).

HCPs can support patients in developing social support systems that allow them to be recognized

and accepted as their authentic identity and help them cope with symptoms of gender dysphoria. Interpersonal problems and lack of social support have been associated with a greater incidence of mental health difficulties in TGD people (Bouman, Davey et al., 2016; Davey et al., 2015) and have been shown to be an outcome predictor of gender-affirming medical treatment (Aldridge et al., 2020). Therefore, HCPs should encourage, support, and empower TGD people to develop and maintain social support systems. These experiences can foster the development of interpersonal skills and help with coping with societal discrimination, potentially reducing suicidality and improving mental health (Pflum et al., 2015).

Statement 18.9

We recommend health care professionals should not make it mandatory for transgender and gender diverse people to undergo psychotherapy prior to the initiation of gender-affirming treatment, while acknowledging psychotherapy may be helpful for some transgender and gender diverse people.

Psychotherapy has a long history of being used in clinical work with TGD people (Fraser, 2009b). The aims, requirements, methods and principles of psychotherapy have been an evolving component of the Standards of Care from the initial versions (Fraser, 2009a). At present, psychotherapeutic assistance and counseling with adult TGD people may be sought to address common psychological concerns related to coping with gender dysphoria and may also help some individuals with the coming-out process (Hunt, 2014). Psychological interventions, including psychotherapy, offer effective tools and provide context for the individual, such as exploring gender identity and its expression, enhancing self-acceptance and hope, and improving resilience in hostile and disabling environments (Matsuno and Israel, 2018). Psychotherapy is an established alternative therapeutic approach for addressing mental health symptoms that may be revealed during the initial assessment or later during the follow-up for gender-affirming medical interventions. Recent research shows, although mental health symptoms are reduced following gender-affirming medical treatment, levels of anxiety remain high (Aldridge et al., 2020) suggesting psychological therapy can play a role in helping

individuals suffering from anxiety symptoms following gender-affirming treatment.

In recent years, the uses and potential benefits of specific psychotherapeutic modalities have been reported (Austin et al., 2017; Budge, 2013; Budge et al., 2021; Embaye, 2006; Fraser, 2009b; Heck et al., 2015). Specific models of psychotherapy have been proposed for adult transgender and nonbinary individuals (Matsuno & Israel, 2018). However, more empiric data is needed on the comparative benefits of different psychotherapeutic models (Catelan et al., 2017). Psychotherapy can be experienced by transgender persons as a fearful as well as a beneficial experience (Applegarth & Nuttall, 2016) and presents challenges to the therapist and to alliance formation when it is associated with gatekeeping for medical interventions (Budge, 2015).

Experience suggests many transgender and nonbinary individuals decide to undergo gender-affirming medical treatment with little or no use of psychotherapy (Spanos et al., 2021). Although various modalities of psychotherapy may be beneficial for different reasons before, during, and after gender-affirming medical treatments and varying rates of desire for psychotherapy have been reported during different stages of transition (Mayer et al., 2019), a requirement for psychotherapy for initiating gender-affirming medical procedures has not been shown to be beneficial and may be a harmful barrier to care for those who do not need this type of treatment or who lack access to it.

Statement 18.10

We recommend “reparative” and “conversion” therapy aimed at trying to change a person’s gender identity and lived gender expression to become more congruent with the sex assigned at birth should not be offered.

The use of “reparative” or “conversion” therapy or gender identity “change” efforts is opposed

by many major medical and mental health organizations across the world, including the World Psychiatric Association, Pan American Health Organization, American Psychiatric and American Psychological Associations, Royal College of Psychiatrists, and British Psychological Society. Many states in the US have instituted bans on practicing conversion therapy with minors. Gender identity change efforts refers to interventions by MHPs or others that attempt to change gender identity or expression to be more in line with those typically associated with the person’s sex assigned at birth (American Psychological Association, 2021).

Advocates of “conversion therapy” have suggested it could potentially allow a person to fit better into their social world. They also point out some clients specifically ask for help changing their gender identities or expressions and therapists should be allowed to help clients achieve their goals. However, “conversion therapy” has not been shown to be effective (APA, 2009; Przeworski et al., 2020). In addition, there are numerous potential harms. In retrospective studies, a history of having undergone conversion therapy is linked to increased levels of depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts, as well as lower educational attainment and less weekly income (Ryan et al., 2020; Salway et al., 2020; Turban, Beckwith et al., 2020). In 2021, the American Psychological Association resolutions states that “scientific evidence and clinical experience indicate that GICEs [gender identity change efforts] put individuals at significant risk of harm” (APA, 2021).

While there are barriers to ending gender identity “change” efforts, education about the lack of benefit and the potential harm of these practices may lead to fewer providers offering “conversion therapy” and fewer individuals and families choosing this option.

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Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interests were reviewed as part of the selection process for committee members and at the end of the process before publication. No conflicts of interest were deemed significant or consequential.

Ethical Approval

This manuscript does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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