

(Needless) Health Hazards of Transsexualism

While transsexualism is not as risky as, say, jumping over automobiles on a motorcycle, there are definite health risks associated with it. These risks are minimal, provided that the person seeks psychological help and follows the Standards of Care. Risks increase when proper avenues of care by bypassed.

First and foremost, a lot of transgendered people do themselves in. No one knows how many suicides there have been by closeted transgendered people, but the high rate of suicides who are crossdressed suggests that the proportion may be relatively high. Mortality for other reasons may also be high. A number of researchers have reported on deaths in their transgendered subject populations. Asscheman, Gooren, & Eklund (1989), who studied 303 male-to-female and 122 female-to-male transsexual people, noted a death rate 2.5 to 9 times that of the general population, due to suicides and unexplained deaths.


Transgendered people punish themselves in other ways, too: by needless risk-taking—proving they are men by entering high-risk occupations or engaging in high-risk activities; by needless sexual risk-taking, or by engaging in prostitution; by abusing bodies they don't like, allowing themselves to become excessively fat or thin, or abusing alcohol or other drugs (including hormones); and by accepting substandard medical or by trying to circumvent medical service providers entirely.

Transgendered persons sometimes procure hormones of dubious nature from questionable sources. Too many subscribe to a "more is better" philosophy, following horrific regimens which can cause mortality, as Ann Bolin reported for one transsexual person in her book, *In Search of Eve*.

Some take the fast road to "beauty." They seek, and get, cheekbones from hell by allowing themselves to be injected with industrial grade, nonsterile liquid silicone by drag queen practitioners. They also get injections in their chins, breasts, arms, calves, thighs, hips, and just about everywhere else a needle can be inserted. There is an alarming trend for the use of silicone to masculinize as well as feminize; it is being injected into biceps and pecs.

The dangers of free silicone are such that the medical literature is filled with warnings about it. It is currently used only by a few physicians,


and in small quantities. The primary dangers of silicone is that it irritates and inflames skin, is subject to being moved by minor physical trauma, if it does not first move of its own accord; that it irritates and inflames, especially when it is mixed with other materials (a common practice); and that it can enter the circulatory, lymphatic, and respiratory systems, causing manifold difficulties. And it is notoriously difficult (and expensive) to remove.

The number of physicians who do state-of-the-art sex reassignment surgery (either male-to-female or female-to-male) can be counted on the fingers. Many transgendered persons accept surgery by doctors who only occasionally do such surgeries, and they often pay the price by having cosmetically unappealing, nonfunctional sexual organs, with high rates of complications. 

References

Asscheman, H., Gooren, L.J., & Eklund, P.L. (1989) Mortality and morbidity in transsexual patients with cross-gender hormone treatment. *Metabolism: Clinical and Experimental*, 38(9), 869-873.

Bolin, A. (1988). *In search of Eve: Transsexual rites of passage*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.



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