Improving Healthcare Quality for Transgender Patients in the Perioperative and Intraoperative Setting: The Patient’s Perspective

Megan A. McAuliffe, MSN, CRNA

Introduction & Problem Significance

- 1.4 million transgender people in the United States (US)
- Health inequities, disease burden, and adverse health consequences among transgender individuals
  - Inadequate provider knowledge
  - Discriminatory/transphobic attitudes
  - Lack of culturally competent providers
- Recognized as one of the most marginalized populations in medicine
- Acceptance and visibility of the transgender community has improved
- 1.4 million transgender people in the United States (U.S)
- Transgender patients have undergone gender-affirming surgery within this academic medical center between July 2017 and December 2019

Purpose & Aims

To improve the perioperative and intraoperative healthcare experience for trans-individuals undergoing gender-affirming surgery:

- **Aim 1:** Examine whether the perception of transgender-related discrimination differs between patients who have undergone MTF and FTM gender-affirming surgery while considering influences of patient characteristics and sociodemographic factors
- **Aim 2:** Explore the healthcare experiences of transgender patients who have undergone transgender affirmation surgery within the setting of an academic medical center
- **Aim 3:** Inform the development of a trans-specific, comprehensive educational and competency-based training program for the perioperative and intraoperative healthcare professionals

Methods

- **Design:** Cross-sectional, mixed-methods study design
- **Setting:** 1,100-bed academic medical center in Baltimore, MD
- **Sample:** Convenience sample of transgender patients who have undergone gender-affirming surgery within the academic medical center between July 2017 and December 2019
- **Ethical Considerations:** Implemented in January 2020 after receiving approval from the hospital’s Internal Review Board

Survey Question FTM (n=28) MTF (n=7) Total Mean Score P
1. You are treated with less courtesy than other people. 1.35 (78) 1.71 (35) 1.58
2. You are treated with less respect than other people. 1.46 (74) 1.71 (35) 1.51
3. You receive poorer service than others. 1.35 (78) 1.71 (35) 1.58
4. A doctor or nurse acts as if he or she thinks you are not smart. 1.39 (87) 1.29 (76) 1.33
5. A doctor or nurse acts as if he or she is afraid of you. 1.17 (47) 1.43 (79) 1.22
6. A doctor or nurse acts as if he or she is better than you. 1.32 (91) 1.71 (35) 1.54
7. You felt like a doctor or nurse is not listening to what you were saying. 1.62 (32) 1.71 (76) 1.64

Summary Score: 10.21 (4.50) 11.29 (5.28) .52

Discussion

- Evidence that trans-patients experienced discrimination when interacting with healthcare providers
- Transition-related factors: gender status, recognizability as a transgender person, and accessing transition-related surgery
- Differences between discrimination scores among trans-patients based on gender transition
- Enabling and predisposing factors: minority race, education, age, employment/income, insurance status, and needing to teach providers about trans-specific needs
- Protective factors for trans-patient: employment status and being older than 45 years of age
- Protective factors for transpatients: annual income ($20,000-59,000 and >$60,000) and being older than 45 years of age

Limitations:

- Sampling technique
- Sample size
- Skewed sociodemographic distribution
- Time/Setting
- IRB

Conclusions

- Negative interactions could have detrimental consequences to the health outcomes, and may also contribute to dissatisfaction with care, further mistrust of healthcare systems, and avoidance of seeking necessary care in the future
- Causes of trans-individual’s perceptions of discrimination may be due to the limited education, training, comfort, and expertise of healthcare professionals on issues and challenges that are unique to the healthcare needs of the transgender community
- Recommendations from the trans-community may translate into better patient-provider interactions, improved health outcomes, and reduction of disparities for the transgender community
- Provide perioperative and intraoperative healthcare professionals with the essential knowledge, skills, competency, and attitudes to provide transgender affirmative care within a large, academic healthcare system

Key References


