

IV International Gender Workshop

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Transgender Persons in Georgia and Their Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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Women's Initiatives Supporting Group

General Information

- Transgender persons represent one of the most marginalized groups in Georgia;
- Due to the fact that their identities are more visible to the society, they become the immediate recipients of societal aggression;
- They are faced with 2 options: start the transition and face the violence; refuse the transition and suffer constant psychological stress.

Violence and Discrimination

- Out of 14 interviewees, that took part in a study on situation of transgender persons in Georgia, 9 had experiences of physical violence;
- All of the respondents admit to constant psychological stress, coming both from family and friends, as well as strangers;

General Healthcare Accessibility

- Study showed that most of the respondents don't seek regular medical assistance or undergo routine check-ups;
- Only 5 respondents have medical insurance;
- The respondents mostly fear transphobic treatment by doctors, other personnel or patients;
- The respondents do not want to face embarrassment and discrimination due to incoherence between their gender markers and gender expression.

SRHR

- More respondents pay attention to HIV/AIDS and STD testing;
- This testing is available at Tanadgoma, AIDS Center;
- The service is described as friendly;

Legal Framework

While both Criminal Code of Georgia and Anti-discrimination Law includes measures guaranteeing protection for transgender persons, there is a wide spectrum of issues relevant to the community, that are not reflected in Georgian legislation.

Legal Gender Recognition

- Legal gender recognition procedures are not regulated by Georgian law;
- The Civil Registry office requires all the applicants to present full proof of “sex reassignment surgery”, which is discriminatory;
- In addition, there is no explanation in any law or any guideline, approved in Georgia, about what constitutes a “sex reassignment surgery”

Trans-specific Medical Procedures

- Unlike homosexuality, transgender identities are still medicalized under the international classificators DSM – V and ICD- 10;
- One of the explanations of the medicalization is that 1) transgender persons who are entering distress due to their gender identities and social stigma need access to therapy and this distress is being diagnosed as gender dysphoria; 2) transgender persons may need access to hormone therapy and different surgeries and it needs to be medically justified

Trans-specific Medical Procedures

- In Georgia, transition procedures are not regulated by law;
- It is the discretion of different psychiatrists and sexologists to use whichever guidelines they want to “diagnose” transgender persons and issue the “true transsexual” certificate

Trans-specific Medical Procedures

- Hormone therapy is not legally accessible to transgender persons in Georgia;
- Surgical procedures for transgender women are considered to be plastic surgery and are easier to justify by surgeons;
- Mastectomy in case of transgender men, is almost impossible to obtain unless the patient has breast cancer;

Trans-specific Medical Procedures

- None of the above mentioned procedures are covered by insurance;
- Reproductive rights for transgender persons are only available while they are presenting as cisgender and are in heterosexual, cisgender relationships;
- None of the fertility services are covered by insurance.

Suggestions

- At the moment, we suggest to separate the stages of transitions;
- This would allow for transgender persons to change gender marker based on a statement from psychiatrist and without invasive procedures;
- There needs to be a common standard for all doctors who diagnose and provide the transition procedures;
- This will make further achievement of depathologization easier, once transgender identities are removed from ICD.