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Summary of "Long term follow-up' of Transsexual Persons"

"Transsexualism or gender identity disorder is a condition in which a person's gender identity-the sense of being a man or woman-contradicts his or her body sex characteristics."

(Cecilia Dhejne) Often times when a man or woman suffers from transsexualism they consider having sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Some treatments include "removal of body hair, vocal training, cross-sex hormonal treatment and surgical changes to make the body as congruent with the opposite sex as possible." (Cecilia Dhejne)

A Sweden research team conducted a long term follow up study of "324 Sexual reassigned persons consisting of 191 male to females, and 133 female to males over a time period of 30 years (1973-2003). With the objective being to estimate mortality, morbidity, and criminal rate after sex reassignment surgery of transsexual persons." (Cecilia Dhejne)

The team used Sweden's national registers to locate and identify "sex reassigned persons, a population control group which consisted of a 10:1 ratio matched by year of birth, birth sex, and reassigned or final sex." (Cecilia Dhejne) They also used the registers to establish "outcome measure such as death of any kind, substance abuse, any crimes committed and psychiatric disorders." (Cecilia Dhejne)

When it came to outcome measures the people who went through sexual reassignment surgery were at an increased risk of "all causes of death including suicide, psychiatric morbidity and crime rate when compared to the control group and the results held true even after adjustment for covariates. However when it came to crime rate this was only significant in the

group who underwent sexual reassignment surgery before 1989. Substance abuse or accidents was not significantly increased." (Cecilia Dhejne)

When compared to controls "male to females were at a higher risk for suicide attempts after sex reassignment surgery, where female to males maintained a female pattern of suicide-attempts. Male to females maintained a male pattern of criminal activity and violent crimes. However female to males were at an increased pattern regarding criminal activity including violent crimes." (Cecilia Dhejne)

They then compared their results to other research done, with "the most striking result being the high mortality rate compared to general population. With one exception that did not find increased mortality only noted increased risk in certain subgroups. Mortality was only significantly increased in the group operated on before 1989. Which they think could have been due to improved health care and altered societal attitudes towards people who have undergone sexual reassignment surgery:" (Cecilia Dhejne)

Overall they felt that further research needed to be conducted and that although~ sexual reassignment surgery may help to "alleviate gender dysphoria there is still much need for post surgical psychiatric and somatic follow up and overall improved care for all individuals who have undergone sexual reassignment surgery." (Cecilia Dhejne)