

Gender Dysphoria in Young People With ASD

Dr. Fatemeh Ranjbar Kermani
Child And Adolescent Psychiatrist

- Recent studies demonstrate that neurodevelopmental disorders and other psychiatric conditions are more common in transgender and gender-diverse individuals.
- The literature review, specifically, provided consistent evidence about a positive relationship between ASD traits and GD feelings in the general population and a high prevalence of GD in autistic individuals.



- GD children have higher ASD traits than control children.
- Children with diagnosed ASD were over four times more likely to have diagnosed GD compared with those without ASD.
- In children with ASD and GD, autism was diagnosed at a significantly older age than in children without GD.
- While birth-assigned sex was not associated with GD in children without ASD, in this study, children with ASD and GD were statistically less likely to be assigned at birth as female compared with children with GD but without ASD

Elizabeth Hisle-Gorman et al. Gender Dysphoria in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. LGBT Health 2019.

- Positive rates for ASD caseness in GD/GI people range from 1.2 to 68%.
- Prevalence of ASD diagnoses in this population was 11 times higher than the ASD prevalence estimate of approximately 1% in the general population .
- Some of the core features of ASD predispose an individual to develop GD feelings or disidentify with the birth-assigned gender, creating a temporal relationship between these conditions.

Aimilia Kallitsounaki and David M. Williams. Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria/Incongruence. A systematic Literature Review and Meta-Analysis. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders 2022.

- Poorer mentalising ability relates to more gender dysphoric feelings.
- An autistic child who has not reached an adequate level of understanding of gender constancy, due to difficulties in mentalising, could be susceptible to increased cross-gender behaviour in childhood and therefore greater likelihood of developing feelings of gender dysphoria or gender nonconformity in adolescence and adulthood.

**Aimilia Kallitsounaki · David M. Williams · Sophie E. Lind.
Links Between Autistic Traits, Feelings of Gender Dysphoria,
and Mentalising Ability: Replication and Extension of Previous
Findings from the General Population Journal of Autism and
Developmental Disorders 2021.**

- Importance of screening for ASD among GD referrals and the importance of screen-ing for gender issues among ASD referrals.
- Assessment may continue over time.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical Guidelines for Co-Occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria or Incongruence in Adolescents. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology 2018

- Adolescents and their parents often require psychoeducation about the nature of the co-occurrence of ASD and GD with a focus on how GD presentation may be different in individuals with ASD than those without ASD.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical
Guidelines for Co-
Occurring Autism
Spectrum Disorder and
Gender Dysphoria or
Incongruence in
Adolescents. Journal of
Clinical Child &
Adolescent Psychology
2018

- The concepts should be presented as simply and concretely as possible.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical
Guidelines for Co-
Occurring Autism
Spectrum Disorder and
Gender Dysphoria or
Incongruence in
Adolescents. Journal of
Clinical Child &
Adolescent Psychology
2018

- A focus on comorbid symptoms may be helpful during this phase, such as treatments targeting: executive function, communication, social cognition.

clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical
Guidelines for Co-
Occurring Autism
Spectrum Disorder and
Gender Dysphoria or
Incongruence in
Adolescents. Journal of
Clinical Child &
Adolescent Psychology
2018

- By providing concrete psychoeducation about how gender for some people can be fluid, not just binary and individuals with less urgent gender presentations may realize that full gender transition does not fit them.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical
Guidelines for Co-
Occurring Autism
Spectrum Disorder and
Gender Dysphoria or
Incongruence in
Adolescents. Journal of
Clinical Child &
Adolescent Psychology
2018

- To develop a specialized consenting plan for adolescent with ASD and GD, with the benefits and risks of medical treatment.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical Guidelines for Co-Occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria or Incongruence in Adolescents. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology 2018

- If hormone treatment is initiated, it may be helpful in some adolescents to start with lower doses and increase more gradually.

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical Guidelines for Co-Occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria or Incongruence in Adolescents. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology 2018

- Attention to:
- Risk of Victimization
- School and Employment
- Romantic Relationships
- Other psychiatric disorders

Clinical assessment and treatment

John f. strang et al.
Initial Clinical
Guidelines for Co-
Occurring Autism
Spectrum Disorder and
Gender Dysphoria or
Incongruence in
Adolescents. Journal of
Clinical Child &
Adolescent Psychology
2018

با تشکر و سپاس