PSYCHIATRIC JOURNAL ADMITS: SURGERY AND HORMONES ARE NOT THE WAY TO GO WITH GENDER-CONFUSION





The American Journal of Psychiatry says it got it wrong last year when it came to analyzing the numbers in a large study of transgender patients undergoing sex-reassignment surgery. Last fall, the journal published the results of the study and said it found the surgeries improved patients' mental health. But this week, CBN News found out that as of 2020 the journal had *retracted* its findings, saying a second look at the subject found no improvement at all. According to Life Site News, the authors now say that gender-confused people who undergo *'gender-reassignment'* surgery are more likely to be treated for anxiety disorders than those who don't have such surgery. Mainstream media are now, however, engaged in a cover-up,

For months now, the mainstream media has touted a recent study purporting to show that *"gender-affirmation"* treatment improves transgender mental health, but a prominent researcher argues that the study's actual findings are very different.

On October 4, the *American Journal of Psychiatry* published a study by a team of Yale researchers based on more than 2.500 people diagnosed with gender incongruence between 2005 and 2015. It falsely claimed in the abstract, that *"years since initiating hormone treatment was not significantly related to likelihood of mental health treatment," but "increased time since last gender-affirming surgery was associated with reduced mental health treatment."*

From that, the authors concluded that the *"longitudinal association between gender-affirming surgery and reduced likelihood of mental health treatment lends support to the decision to provide gender-affirming surgeries to transgender individuals who seek them."*

We now know all this is not true. The authors have retracted their paper in 2020. There was no long-term study involved, and there was no reference group or control group to compare the data with, a scientific sin.

Bogus allegations

In 2019, the findings led to various headlines proclaiming things like "Long-Term Mental

Health Benefits of Gender-Affirming Surgery for Transgender Individuals" (American Psychiatric Association), "Sex-reassignment surgery yields long-term mental health benefits" (NBC News), and "Transgender surgery linked with better long-term mental health, study shows" (ABC News).

"As of 2020, such readings are not warranted by the study itself", says University of Texas sociology professor Mark Regnerus, a prominent researcher on family and sexuality issues who analyzed the study Wednesday at The Public Discourse.

Regnerus argued the problem arises with the *"scholarly interpretations of the study's results, which are remarkably out of step with the far more modest conclusions they merit".*

No benefits from hormones

He wrote,

> *"The study found no mental health benefits for hormonal interventions in this population. Given the surge in interest, demand, and supply of hormonal therapies to self-identified transgender persons today, you would think that it is a solution that pays obvious benefits in reduced subsequent need — over time — for treatment of mood or anxiety disorder, or hospitalization after a suicide attempt. Yet there was no statistically significant effect. In fact, the confidence intervals actually reveal a nearly significant aggravating effect of hormonal treatment on subsequent mental health needs."*

According to the actual data, Regnerus wrote, a clinic

> *"may have to perform as many as 49 gender-affirming surgeries before they could expect to prevent one additional person from seeking subsequent mental health treatment. Yet that's not what the authors say."*

Surgery helps beating about the bush

A range of scientific literature *indicates* that reinforcing a patient's gender confusion often fails to prevent significant emotional harm up to and including attempted suicide (*with or without surgery*), because fixating on *"gender affirmation"* tends to distract from exploring other issues that may be the actual root of a patient's mental or emotional unrest.

> *"The corruption of data and analyses with a skewed interpretation, signals an abandonment of scientific rigor and reason, in favor of complicity with activist groups. These non-scientific pressure groups seek to normalize infertility-inducing and permanently disfiguring surgeries,"* Regnerus warned. "*Physicians should not be pushed to prescribe*

such profoundly consequential treatment by threat of call-out, malpractice suits, patient demand, or — in this case — the overreaching interpretations of quality data."

"Clinicians are being bullied into writing a radical prescription based on fear, not on sensible conclusions from empirical data," he said. *"But this reasonable position is getting more difficult to defend."*

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Searching for a preferred outcome

When asked about how a prestigious journal incorrectly analyzes its data, Dr. Ryan Anderson, the Heritage Foundation's William E. Simon senior research fellow in American Principles and Public Policy, told CBN News there may have been a preferred outcome for the study.



Dr. Ryan Anderson

"Human error is a possibility here. But there's also the possibility that there was a preferred outcome for the study. They wanted the study to say a certain thing. Obviously, we don't know in this particular instance whether this was just an honest mistake or if this was motivated to lead to a certain conclusion."

"But we can say that the media didn't report on one of the main findings of the original study which was that hormonal transition showed no signs of improvement. They only reported on the original study that said surgery transition showed signs of improvement. And now that claim has been retracted."

Anderson, the author of *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement*, said the original study had been celebrated by the media and was then used in social media against anyone with a dissenting viewpoint to accuse them of being against science.

This *"does show that the cultural moment in which we're living suggests that there's only one allowed conclusion to this question. And the only allowed conclusion is that transition is the best solution. The biggest data set now shows and that's what this study us-*

> *es, the biggest data set shows that there's no benefits, psychological benefits to patients of hormonal and surgical transition."*

When asked if those struggling with gender dysphoria should think twice about surgery, Anderson told CBN News people who are struggling with their own gender identity deserve to know the truth.

> *"And what the science is showing is that hormonal-surgical transition doesn't provide the promised wholeness and happiness patients are seeking. So what we need to do is find ways to help patients feel comfortable in their own bodies. We need to be respectful. We need to be compassionate. We also need to be truthful. And so, we need to be helping patients who feel uncomfortable in their bodies to once again feel comfortable in their bodies. But not to radically transform their bodies, because that does not bring the lasting wholeness and happiness that they seek."*

Anderson also mentioned he had not seen any media coverage of the journal's correction, but he thinks the most important thing to focus on right now is children.

> *"Right now, parents are being told that they need to put their children on the prescribed puberty-blocking drugs, Cross X hormones, etc, etc, That is entirely an unstudied experimental treatment protocol. And so I think in particular we need more research on what we can do for young people, children who feel uncomfortable in their own bodies and how we can help them feel comfortable once again. But we shouldn't be running to prescribe puberty-blocking drugs and Cross X hormones. Parents should know the facts about this as well."*

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The speed of the radical campaign

In his book called "When Harry Became Sally" (2018), Anderson wrote how the transgender movement has hit breakneck speed. In the space of a year, it's gone from something that most Americans had never heard of to a cause claiming the mantle of civil rights.

But can a boy truly be "trapped" in a girl's body? Can modern medicine really "reassign" sex? Is sex something "assigned" in the first place? What's the loving response to a friend or child experiencing a gender-identity conflict? What should our law say on these issues?

In his book, Anderson reveals a grim contrast between the media's sunny depiction and the often sad realities of gender-identity struggles. He introduces readers to people who tried to *"transition"* but found themselves no better off. Especially troubling is the suffering felt by

adults who were encouraged to transition as children but later came to regret it.

And there is a reason that many do regret it. As Anderson shows, the most helpful therapies focus not on achieving the impossible—changing bodies to conform to thoughts and feelings—but on helping people accept and even embrace the truth about their bodies and reality. This discussion will be of particular interest to parents who fear how an ideological school counselor might try to steer their child. The best evidence shows that the vast majority of children naturally grow out of any gender-conflicted phase. But no one knows how new school policies might affect children indoctrinated to believe that they really are trapped in the "wrong" body.

Throughout the book, Anderson highlights the various contradictions at the heart of this moment: How it embraces the gnostic idea that the real self is something other than the body, while also embracing the idea that nothing but the physical exists. How it relies on rigid sex stereotypes—in which dolls are for girls and trucks are for boys—while also insisting that gender is purely a social construct, and that there are no meaningful differences between women and men. How it assumes that feelings of identity deserve absolute respect, while the facts of our embodiment do not. How it preaches that people should be free to do as they please and define their own truth—while enforcing a ruthless campaign to coerce anyone who dares to dissent.

Everyone has something at stake in today's debates about gender identity. In his book, Anderson shows how the law is being used to coerce and penalize those who believe the truth about human nature. He demonstrates education and employment policies, Obama-era bathroom and locker-room mandates, politically correct speech codes and religious-freedom violations. Above all, he shows how Americans can begin to push back.

To be continued

Job Berendsen, MD

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