

Love, Sex, & the Body: Exploring the sexual and romantic relationships of transgender people

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Literature Review

- Topics Studied
 - Surgical procedure
 - Surgery satisfaction
 - Health
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Prostitution
 - Passing
 - Community

Literature Review

- Sexual satisfaction
 - Limited to post-op sexual satisfaction
 - Hormone therapy
 - Sexuality not the main focus
- Sexual orientation
 - Hormone therapy

Current Study

- Narratives of transgender people
- Family
- School
- Work
- Intimate relationships
- Sexuality
- Body

Method - Recruitment

- Non-probability snowball sampling
 - 1) Organizations and social groups
 - 2) Listservs, chat rooms, and websites
 - 3) Referrals
 - 4) LGBT community centers, newspapers, conferences

Method - Participants

- 18+ years old
- Identify currently or at one time as transgender

Method - Procedure

- Consent form
- Demographic questionnaire
- In-depth interview

Analysis

- Digital audio recording
- Transcription
- Field notes
- Coding for emerging themes

Results - Demographics

- Age
 - Median – 37
 - Range – 21 - 59
- Geographic locations
 - 6 – Southwest United States
 - 2 – Eastern United States
 - 1 – Western United States
- Income
 - Range: \$0 - \$85,000
- Education
 - Range: Some college – Master's degree
- Employment Status
 - Student
 - Full time
 - Underemployed
 - Part time
 - Retired military
 - Unemployed

Results - Demographics

- Gender identity
 - 4 – Male
 - 2 – FTM
 - 1 – Genderqueer
 - 1 – In between
 - 1 – Female
- Desire to become the other gender
 - 5 – Between the ages of 3-5
 - 1 – Between the ages of 6-11
 - 1 – Between the ages of 12-21
 - 2 – Did not reply

Results - Demographics

- Ethnic/racial identity
 - 8 – White
 - 1 – Native
- Religious/spiritual beliefs
 - 3 – None
 - 3 – Christian
 - 1 – Pagan
 - 1 – Eclectic
 - 1 – Varied

Results - Demographics

- Sexual Attraction
 - Cis – women
 - Women
 - Heterosexual
 - Queer
 - Androgynous people
- Partner Status
 - 4 – Single
 - 1 – Dating/Polyamory
 - 2 – Domestic partnership
 - 1 – Married
 - 1 – In a relationship

Emerging themes

- Breasts
- Hormones
- Passing
- Surgery
- Puberty
- Dating
- Erections
- Coming out twice
- Fluid gender
- Fluid sexuality
- Partners identity
- Name change
- Imagining the body differently during sexual encounters

Participants - Gabe

- 25 year old unemployed college graduate
 - Other gender vs. another gender
 - Tomboy vs. being a boy
 - Came out twice
 - Supportive family
 - Tested the water with drag
 - Started dating late
 - Hormones
 - Top surgery
 - Fluid gender
 - Name change – therapist – hormones – top surgery
 - Partners identity
 - Comfortable with his body
 - Sex happens in his head
 - Fantasizes about having a penis
 - No touch zone

Participants - Russell

- 52 year old social worker
 - Only child
 - Single parent home
 - Lesbian identity
 - Coming out twice
 - Christine Jorgensen
 - Few FTM models
 - Hormones
 - Passing
 - Birth name & public self
 - Physical appearance
 - Breasts
 - No-touch zone
 - First menarche
 - Top & bottom surgery
 - Imagines having a penis when having sex
 - Gay men

Participants - Dillon

- 21 year old college student
 - Women's college
 - Hormones
 - Finding his name
 - Single-parent home
 - Mom had both boyfriends and girlfriends
 - Younger brother
 - Top surgery
 - Breasts
 - Binders
 - No-touch zone
 - Sexual orientation of partners
 - New privilege
 - Coming out twice
 - Heterosexism
 - Homophobia
 - Imagines having a penis during sex

Participants - Angie

- 25 year old genderqueer female
 - Drag performance & Burlesque
 - Supportive family
 - Does not like binaries
 - Looks for partners who are just people
 - The categories do not work for her
 - Parents are confused by queer
 - Sex with her partner is based on communication and feeling good
 - No kind of sex is off limits as long as it is not hurtful
 - Had to come out based on who she was dating

Participants - Robbie

- 43 year old Native guy and graduate student
 - Native
 - Cis-men
 - Drugs & alcohol
 - High school drop out
 - Domestic violence
 - Rape
 - Parent
 - Reservation
 - Breasts
 - BDSM
 - Polyamory
 - Kink
 - Fantasy
 - Exploring/questioning sexual desire
 - Exploring identity
 - Finding community

Participants - Gavin

- 22 year old college student
 - Parents are psychologists
 - “Normal” little girl
 - Picked on
 - Dated boys
 - Came out twice
 - Depression
 - Internalized transphobia/homophobia
 - Women’s college
 - Passing
 - Employment
 - Breasts
 - Top surgery
 - Hormones
 - No-touch zone (oral sex & penetration)
 - Partner’s sexual orientation
 - Being seen as male in relationships
 - Pleasuring partner
 - Imagine having a “dick”
 - Comfortable in his skin, less with sexual encounters

Participants - Rose

- 59 year old retired military
 - Divorced
 - Currently legally married
 - Has a son
 - Long transition time (4 years)
 - Top & bottom surgery
 - Gender has always been fixed, it's her sex that she changed
 - Prayed to God to fix her
 - Alcohol
 - Depression
 - Always attracted to women
 - Son said it would be easier if she was just gay
 - Sex is different now
 - Orgasm is different now
 - Relating to people the way she wants is a great change
 - She feels complete now
 - Erections were disconcerting

Participants - Ryan

- 25 year old unemployed bisexual guy
 - Came out twice
 - Depression
 - Internalized transphobia/homophobia
 - Voice change and singing
 - Passing
 - Breasts
 - Top surgery
 - Hormones
 - No-touch zone
 - Partner's sexual orientation
 - Being seen as male in relationships
 - Pleasuring partner
 - Imagine having a “dick”
 - Afraid to ask for sexual acts
 - Partner encouraged him to transition

Participants - Dana

- 50 year old transitioning woman
 - Going through a divorce
 - Has not had any partners since beginning her transition
 - Social support very important
 - Passing
 - Living as a woman
 - Therapy
 - Nervous about sexual encounters
 - Not sure what she wants in a relationship
 - Erections are difficult
 - Still finding herself
 - Learning to be a woman
 - Surgery questions

Limitations

- Phone interviews
- Depth of topics
- More questions about sex, fantasy, and desire
- Limited time for interviews

Future research

- Expand more on sex, sexuality, fantasy, and attraction
- Target a more diverse population
- Longer interviews
- Face-to-face interviews

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Questions

