

5. What are the treatment options for gender dysphoria?

In general, an individual seeking medical advice would first undergo comprehensive psychiatric and psychological assessment. Psychiatrists will consider the clinical condition and the individual's desire to ascertain the appropriate treatment options, including:

A. Hormonal Treatment

Endocrinologists will assess the individual's clinical condition and explain the benefits and risks of hormonal treatment. With the individual's consent, hormonal medication will be prescribed to facilitate the physical transition towards the preferred gender.

B. Real-life experience

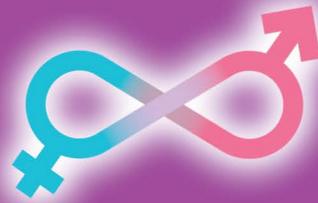
During a real-life experience period of no less than 12 months, the individual will live in all aspects as the preferred gender. It is expected that the individual should be able to display a high level of occupational and social adaptability in the gender role congruent with the preferred gender identity.

C. Psychotherapy

The individual who has undergone major changes in appearance and life style will be closely observed by psychiatrists to assess his/her psychological well-being and ability in coping with these changes. Psychiatrists will also assist the individual in deciding whether irreversible treatment is indicated. Psychotherapy during the transition period will facilitate the individual in realistically assessing the changes, benefits and disadvantages of the treatments, enhancing his/her sense of responsibility with strengthened resilience to cope with the changes.

D. Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) / Gender affirmation surgery (GAS)

Upon completion of the real-life experience period and reaching consensus with the clinical team for undergoing SRS/GAS, the individual will be referred for surgery treatment. The surgeons will assess whether the individual is suitable for SRS/GAS based on his/her clinical situation.



Gender Identity Clinic

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Gender Dysphoria



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1. What is gender dysphoria?

Individuals with gender dysphoria have a marked incongruence between their natal gender and experienced/expressed gender and they feel distressed about this incongruence. An individual may experience gender dysphoria if he/she is unable to identify with his/her natal gender and the associated gender role in the society and has a deep psychological conviction that he/she should be of the opposite gender. Gender dysphoria can start at a young age. The individuals may persistently experience emotional distress, feeling themselves born into the wrong body.

2. What are the causes of gender dysphoria?

The cause of gender dysphoria is unclear. Researchers believe that the situation results from a multitude of causes including innate genes, personal background, as well as family and society factors.

3. How does one know if he/she is having gender dysphoria?

- (A) The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition ("DSM-5") states the diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria as a marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and his/her assigned gender which lasted for at least six months and manifested by at least two of the following:
- (1) a marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics;
 - (2) a strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one's experienced/expressed gender;
 - (3) a strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender;
 - (4) a strong desire to be of the other gender;
 - (5) a strong desire to be treated as the other gender; and
 - (6) a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender.
- (B) The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Individuals with gender dysphoria almost always have to suppress their distress for gender identity. Under the influence of social perception and gender stereotypes of the community, they may feel distressed, afraid or shameful about their strong desire to be of the other gender. As a result, people with gender dysphoria have a greater tendency towards depression, substance abuse and self-mutilation.

4. Where to seek medical advice if in doubt of one's gender identity?

The Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) of the Hospital Authority (HA) at the Prince of Wales Hospital provides a one-stop gender identity services ranging from assessment to treatment. The GIC accepts referrals of clients aged 18 or above from registered medical practitioners in Hong Kong and clinical psychologists of HA. HA adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in providing the services, with team members comprising psychiatrists, endocrinologists, surgeons, clinical psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists and medical social workers.

