

[30] Comparison of depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation in transgender individuals based on their parents' reaction

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Background

The word “transgender” is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression is different from those of their sex assigned at birth and therefore experience gender dysphoria. A transgender is at an increased risk of mental health illness such as depression, anxiety, and/or suicide in comparison to a non-transgender individual, particularly when experiencing parental rejection to their gender identity. This study was conducted to compare the level of depression and anxiety of transgenders who have come out to their parents, in accordance with the parents' reaction to it

Methods

A retrospective chart review was conducted on 37 transgender individuals who had visited Bongseng Memorial Hospital in order to have a psychiatric assessment test before engaging in sexual reassignment therapy. The subjects were divided into two groups: those who felt accepted and those felt rejected at the time of coming out. Categorical variables were compared using Fisher's exact test and continuous variables were compared using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Results

There were no significant differences in intelligence tested by the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale and employment status between the two groups. Nineteen subjects who did not receive acceptance from their parents were older (24.32 ± 6.73 vs. 20.73 ± 2.91) with longer years of education (14.26 ± 2.18 vs. 12.27 ± 1.22) ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, subjects whose parents rejected their gender identity showed higher scores of Beck depression inventory (17.58 ± 10.48 vs. 8.13 ± 5.74), Beck anxiety inventory (12.11 ± 11.44 vs. 3.67 ± 3.72), and Beck scale of suicidal ideation (10.11 ± 7.84 vs. 4.60 ± 5.00) compared to those whose parents showed acceptance ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion

The study turned out that parental rejection was considered the main element which increases depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation for transgender individuals. In

order to protect their mental health, parental- and family-based interventions are strongly recommended.

