



Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

Caring for Gender Diverse Youth with Cystic Fibrosis

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What was your research question?

Transgender or gender diverse people have a gender identity that does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Our goal was to provide an overview about care for gender diverse youth (GDY) with cystic fibrosis (CF).

Why is this important?

GDY who have CF have unique health needs that need to be understood by their health care teams.

What did you do?

We reviewed the literature and discussed these unique needs for medical and mental health providers.

What did you find?

GDY with CF should have the opportunity to share their gender identity with their health providers and have that identity respected by the people who care for them in clinic and in the hospital. It is important that health systems create spaces that feel safe for GDY. They face higher rates of mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, and suicide. However, feeling supported can improve their mental health. GDY are also at greater risk for disordered eating, which is important to consider as good nutrition is key for people with CF. They may also wear chest binders (tight-fitting garments that compresses breasts), but this may make it harder to breathe. Some GDY desire to have surgery to remove breast tissue. Airway



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clearance post-operatively is important, but challenging because of wound healing. GDY may also be interested in medicines that support their gender identity like puberty blockers and hormones, but the side effects of such treatments, particularly on bone density, in people with CF are unclear.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

More research is needed to understand these risks. Because CF teams work closely with young people and their families over many years, they may be the first people GDY feel comfortable talking to about their gender identity.

What's next?

CF teams should be educated about how to best support gender diverse patients with CF and their families.

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