Gender Identity Disorders

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Lecture Outline

- Important concepts – gender role, status & identity; sexual identity – orientation - behavior
- Culture and sexuality
- Gender Identity Disorders
Psychosexual factors

**Important concepts:**

- Sexual *Identity* & Gender *Identity/Role*
- Sexual *Orientation*
- Sexual *Behavior*
Sexual (Genetic) Identity

- Male genotype = XY
- Female genotype = XX
Sexual (Genetic) Identity

- The *differentiation male - female* results from the action of fetal androgens between 6th week & the end of the 3rd month of life.

- The fetus is vulnerable to exogenously administered androgens during prenatal development.
Gender (Cultural) Identity & Role

*Gender identity* is based on *culturally determined* sets of attitudes, behavior patterns, and other attributes associated with *masculinity and femininity*.
Influence of culture

Culture and Zeitgeist designate what behaviors, attitudes, personality traits are masculine or feminine.
Gender (Cultural) Identity & Role

- Gender role and gender identity must be distinguished from biological sex.
- Under normal (ideal) circumstances, gender role and gender identity are congruent.
Gender identity (GI)

- GI is the private cognition, the sense of being male or female.

- GI arises from:
  - the infant’s external genitalia
  - from parental and cultural attitudes
Gender identity (GI)

- Psychological aspects of behavior related to *masculinity and femininity* – gender (social/cultural) roles are reinforced by adults.

- Forms early in life; by age 2 - 3 almost everyone has a conviction about being ‘male’ or ‘female’.
Gender Role Behavior

*Gender role behavior* refers to specific activities that are expected within a given society:

- Clothing, hairstyle, adornment
- Mannerism, forms of speech
- Recreational activities, occupation, household duties, etc.
Gender Status

- *Gender status* is publicly ascribed and recognized, based on genitalia and other requirements.

- It is a cultural/social construct.
Gender Dysphoria

**Gender dysphoria**

- Sense of *discomfort* in anatomically congruent gender role
- Desire to possess the *body of the opposite sex*
- *Negative affect* associated with these experiences
Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual and affectional attraction to another person
Sexual orientation

- Sexual orientation is related to the object of a person’s sexual impulses on a continuum ranging from:
  - Homosexual (exclusively) – gay & lesbian
  - Heterosexual (exclusively)
  - Bisexual
Sexual orientation

- Biological factors (genetic)
- Psychological factors - Personality traits
- Environmental influences - Learning experiences
- Complex interactions: genes - environment
Culture & sexuality

Cultural norms guide the perception of what is considered normal and desirable in sexual behavior & experience.

Certain activities are considered normal in one culture and deviant in others.
New Guinea (Sambia)

- High male dominance - desired ‘warrior personality’ (kill without hesitation, unafraid of pain, be familiar with the sight of blood, and be completely bound to his male comrades) can develop by separating the young boys from mother and other females since the age of 7 & training rituals of purification.

- The rite of passage included ingestion of semen through ritual fellatio.

- Sex with females is defined as ‘polluting’.
Indonesia

Transvestite individuals (usually male) occupy a ritually privileged position as symbols of ancestral potency and/or guardians of royal ‘houses’ regalia.
India

- Eunuchs, known as ‘hijras’ in Hindi, are either castrated men or transvestites
- India has several hundred thousand of eunuchs, the so-called ‘third sex’, who are regarded as auspicious
  - Eunuchs have lived on the fringe of society
  - Shabnam Mausi is India’s first eunuch to occupy a seat in a state assembly
Hawaii/Polynesia

- In some instances, an infant boy is raised as a female because the family had too many boys and wanted a girl

- **Mahu** - Individual born as male but raised from infancy as female (no stigma) & is seen as a woman

- Sexual relations between a man and a mahu are not regarded as homosexual
Mahu & Western influence

- Mahus did not experience emotional distress and social and occupational impairment in the past.
- Mahus now experience symptoms associated with GID and some undergo hormone treatment and gender reassignment surgery.
Western culture

- Individualistic - *personal goals* are primary & group goals secondary; individual identity more salient than group identity
- Extremely male dominant societies
- GID & Transsexualism are recognized as disorders
Gender Identity Disorders

- 302.6 Gender Identity Disorder in Children
- 302.85 Gender Identity Disorder in Adolescents or Adults
  - Specify: Sexually attracted to males/females/both/neither
- 302.6 Gender Identity Disorder NOS
- 302.9 Sexual Disorder NOS
Clinical features of GID

- Strong and persistent cross-gender identification
- Persistent discomfort one’s biological sex & there is evidence of significant distress or impaired social, occupational, or other areas of functioning.
Phenomenology of GID

- Preoccupation with appearance, most free time spent on improving image due to gender distress
- Very uncomfortable being regarded by others, or function in society, as member of designated sex
- Feelings of social isolation
- Low self esteem
GID & physical intersex condition

People **cannot be diagnosed with GID** when they have a concurrent physical intersex condition.
Course & prognosis for GID

- Childhood onset.

- Prognosis depends on age of onset and severity/intensity of symptoms
Course & prognosis for GID

- Homosexuality is likely to develop in 1/3rd to 2/3rd of individuals with GID

- Transsexualism occurs in less than 10% of individuals with GID

- Depression is common.
Treatment of individuals with GID

- Parental counseling
- Psychotherapy
- **Hormonal treatment** with estradiol & progesterone in male-to-female changes and testosterone in female-to-male changes.
- Sex-reassignment surgery
Differential diagnosis issues

Distinguish from:

- *Nonconformity* to stereotypical gender-role behaviors
- *Transvestic fetishism*
- *GID NOS* for individuals with a concurrent congenital intersex condition
- *Schizophrenia* (may be delusional)