

Overrepresentation of Adopted Adolescents in a Hospital Based Gender Dysphoria Clinic

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Introduction

- We noted an increase in adopted children presenting to Gender Clinic at Boston Children's Hospital
 - First reported by Zucker and Bradley (1998): 7.8% of referred male assigned patients had been adopted (compared to 1.49% rate of adoption in Ontario)¹
 - One case report of a child adopted at age 16 months with gender dysphoria and attachment disorder²

¹Zucker KJ & Bradley SJ. Adoptee overrepresentation among clinic-referred boys with gender identity disorder. *Can J Psychiatry* **43**, 1040-3 (1998)

²Michaud I & Boivin J. When attachment disorder presents with symptoms of gender identity disorder: Case discussion. *J Can Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* **18**, 136-137 (2009)

Methods

- Data from 184 adolescents presenting to GeMS clinic at Boston Children's Hospital (2007-2015) was reviewed
 - Charts reviewed manually
 - Assessment notes were reviewed for adoption status and sex assigned at birth
 - For adopted patients, other information was extracted:
 - Age at adoption
 - Birthplace
- State and national census data was reviewed regarding population-level adoption rates

Results

- 15/184 patients were adopted (8.2%)
 - US adoption Rate is 2.4%*
 - Massachusetts adoption rate is 2.3%*
 - Rate of adoptees presenting to our clinic was higher than expected based on US and Massachusetts census data ($p < 0.001$)

*US Census, 2010

Results

- Of the 15 adopted children
 - Age at assessment: 9.5 to 17.2 years (mean 13.6 years)
 - 8/15 assigned male at birth
 - 7/15 assigned female at birth
 - No significant sex difference ($p=0.43$)

Discussion:

- Reason for overrepresentation?
 - True difference
 - Difference related to identity development differences in adopted children?
 - Not true difference
 - Increase in acceptance of gender identity differences in adoptive parents?
 - Increase in access to tertiary care center by adoptive families?