

ABSTINENCE OF DRUGS AS A STEP TOWARDS GENDER TRANSITION: A TRANSGENDER TALE

INTRODUCTION

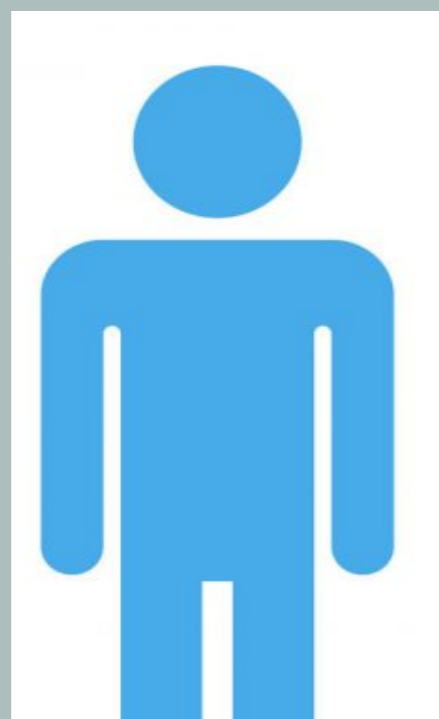
- The terms transgender, gender dysphoria (DSM-5) and gender incongruence (ICD-11) refer to a situation where an individual's gender identity differs from external sexual anatomy at birth.
- For those who desire to undergo gender transition, available gender identity-affirming care may include hormone therapy and surgery.
- Before considering such interventions, it is necessary to confirm the diagnosis of gender dysphoria and identify any medical and psychiatric diagnosis that may require treatment.
- The transgender population has high rates of alcohol use, illicit drug use, and nonmedical use of prescription drugs, and show more severe misuse of these substances when compared with nontransgender individuals. Explanations for this heightened risk of substance use disorders have focused predominantly on cultural and environmental factors such as social stigma, transphobia, prejudice and discrimination.

CASE REPORT

ADDICTION

UNIT

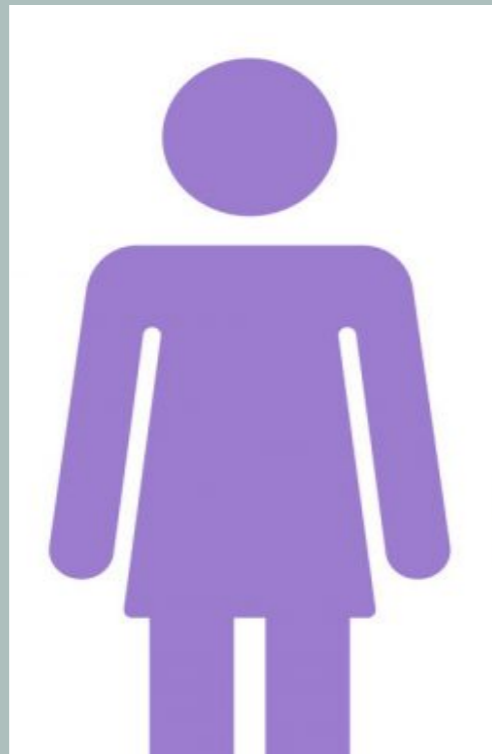
♂ 36 years old



- Adult with unambiguous anatomical male sex at birth

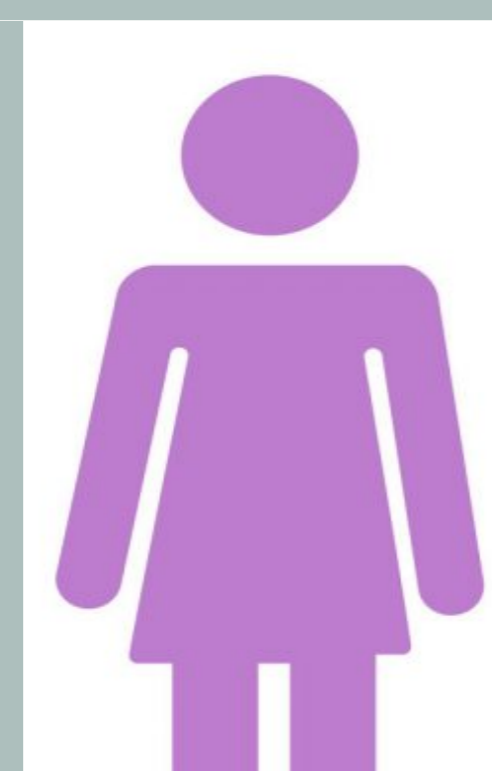
- Presents to an Addiction Unit for treatment of **alcohol and cocaine** use disorders.

After a few visits at the
addiction unit



- Provides a typical history of gender dysphoria beginning at 10 years of age.
- Addictive behaviours started at the age of 16.
- The patient considers cocaine and alcohol coping mechanism towards his gender-related distress.
- The patient is referred to a gender-affirming care unit at Hospital Magalhães Lemos.

Gender-Affirming Care Unit



- The patient began gender identity-affirming care and wishes to undergo gender-affirming surgery.
- The patient has maintained abstinence of cocaine and moderate use of alcohol as a condition to proceed with treatment.

CONCLUSION

This case calls for specific attention to address problematic substance use among transgender individuals, indicating a need for culturally sensitive interventions.

Conflict of interest: the author declares that they have no conflict of interest.