

# EPATH 2019: The Year in Review - Mental Health -

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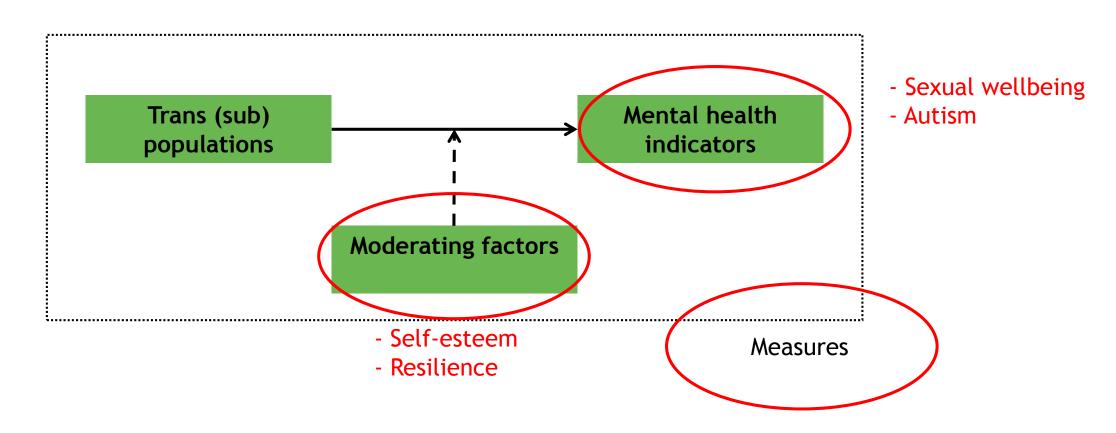




## Background

- Mental health impacts quality of life
- Mental health impacts socioeconomic position
- Mental health impacts experienced outcomes of gender affirming treatments
- Risk of self-harm and suicidal behavior





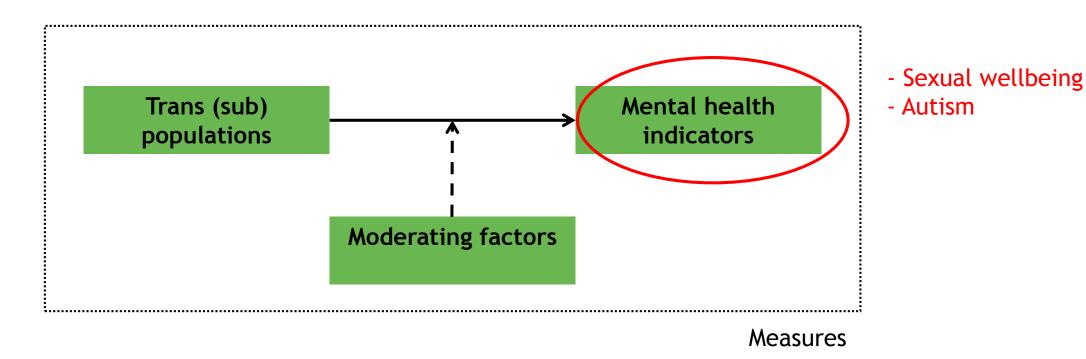


## Approach

- Pubmed searches, snowball approach
- 2017 to 2019
- Title (and abstract) screening
- Narrative review









### Sexual wellbeing - reviews

#### Holmberg et al.:

- Evaluate sexual (dys)function in transgender persons multidimensionally
- Hormone treatment and sexual desire; trans men ↑ and trans women ↓
- Explore sexual function wishes before hormone/surgical treatments
- Many principles from sexual medicine apply to transgender sexual health issues

#### • Stephenson et al.:

- Limited no. of studies, with limited scope
- Agenda on inclusive study of trans men's sexuality

<sup>•</sup> Holmberg et al. (2018). Supporting sexuality and improving sexual function in transgender persons. Nature Reviews Urology, 1.

<sup>•</sup> Stephenson et al. (2017). The sexual health of transgender men: a scoping review. The Journal of Sex Research, 54(4-5), 424-445.



### Sexual wellbeing - orientation

- Sexual preferences may change during (medical) transition, but sexual partners may not necessarily
- More sexual fluidity in trans men, compared with cis men/women. Associated with psychological stress and more mental health problems

<sup>•</sup> Fein et al. (2018). Sexual Preferences and Partnerships of Transgender Persons Mid-or Post-Transition. Journal of homosexuality, 65(5), 659-671.

<sup>•</sup> Katz-Wise et al. (2017). Longitudinal associations of sexual fluidity and health in transgender men and cisgender women and men. *Psychology of sexual orientation and gender diversity*, 4(4), 460.



## Sexual wellbeing - gender-specific

#### Trans women

• Sexual inactivity is prevalent in transwomen (43%) and associated with older age, no genital surgery yet and lower body image

#### Trans men

 More sexual activity, initiative and involvement of genitals during sex (78%) after genital gender affirming surgery

#### • Both

EPATH | April 2019

 Body satisfaction appears to be more influential on positive sexual experience compared with gender affirming surgeries

<sup>•</sup> Nikkelen et al. (2018). Sexual experiences in transgender people: the role of desire for (...). Journal of sex & marital therapy, 44(4), 370-381.

<sup>•</sup> Scheim et al. (2019). Sexual Inactivity Among Transfeminine Persons: A Canadian Respondent-Driven (...). The Journal of Sex Research, 56(2), 264-271.

<sup>•</sup> van de Grift et al. (2017). A longitudinal study of motivations before and psychosexual outcomes (...). The journal of sexual medicine, 14(12), 1621-1628.

<sup>•</sup> van de Grift et al. (2019). Transmen's Experienced Sexuality and Genital Gender-Affirming Surgery: (...). Journal of sex & marital therapy, 1-5.



### **Autistic traits**

- About 5% of referred individuals score above clinical cutoffs of the AQ, in 6% a certain autism spectrum diagnosis was confirmed
- More prevalent in trans feminine compared with trans masculine and compared with cis gender controls. Not confirmed in all studies
- AQ explained by social anxiety and minority stress? Associated with feelings of dysphoria

<sup>•</sup> Heylens et al. (2018). The co-occurrence of gender dysphoria and autism spectrum (...). Journal of autism and developmental disorders, 48(6), 2217-2223.

<sup>•</sup> Nobili et al. (2018). Autistic traits in treatment-seeking transgender adults. Journal of autism and developmental disorders, 48(12), 3984-3994.

<sup>•</sup> Vermaat et al. (2018). Self-reported autism spectrum disorder symptoms among adults referred to a gender identity clinic. LGBT health, 5(4), 226-233.



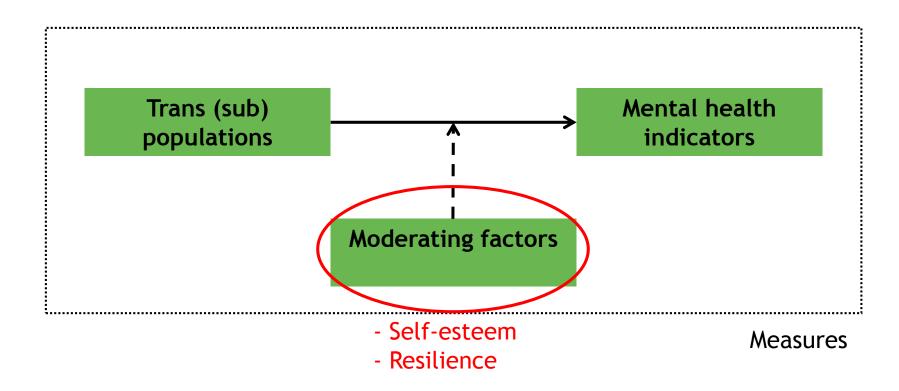
### **Autistic traits**

### Initial Clinical Guidelines for Co-Occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Dysphoria or Incongruence in Adolescents

John F. Strang<sup>1</sup>, Haley Meagher<sup>1</sup>, Lauren Kenworthy<sup>1</sup>, Annelou L. C. de Vries<sup>2</sup>, Edgardo Menvielle<sup>3</sup>, Scott Leibowitz<sup>4</sup>, Aron Janssen<sup>5</sup>, Peggy Cohen-Kettenis<sup>6</sup>, Daniel E. Shumer<sup>7</sup>, Laura Edwards-Leeper<sup>8</sup>, Richard R. Pleak<sup>9</sup>, Norman Spack<sup>10</sup>, Dan H. Karasic<sup>11</sup>, Herbert Schreier<sup>12</sup>, Anouk Balleur<sup>6</sup>, Amy Tishelman<sup>13</sup>, Diane Ehrensaft<sup>14</sup>, Leslie Rodnan<sup>15</sup>, Emily S. Kuschner<sup>16</sup>, Francie Mandel<sup>17</sup>, Antonia Caretto<sup>18</sup>, Hal C. Lewis<sup>19</sup>, and Laura G. Anthony<sup>20</sup>

<sup>•</sup> Strang et al. (2018). Initial clinical guidelines for co-occurring autism spectrum disorder and gender dysphoria or incongruence in adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 47(1), 105-115.

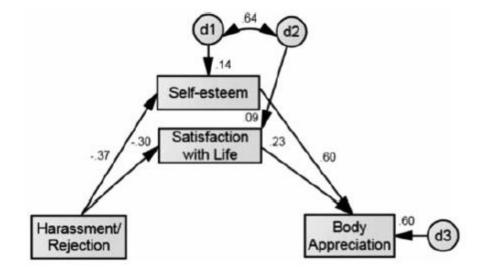






### Moderators of mental health - self-esteem

- Self-esteem and interpersonal problems as predictors of
  - Depressive symptoms
  - Drive for thinness and disordered eating
- Self-esteem mediates between discrimination and mental health outcomes



<sup>•</sup> Jones et al. (2018). Risk Factors for Eating Disorder Psychopathology within the Treatment (...). European Eating Disorders Review, 26(2), 120-128.

<sup>•</sup> Tabaac et al. (2018). Discrimination, mental health, and body image among transgender and (...). Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 30(1), 1-16.

<sup>•</sup> Witcomb et al. (2018). Levels of depression in transgender people and its predictors: Results of a large (...). Journal of Affective Disorders, 235, 308-315.



### Moderators of mental health - resilience

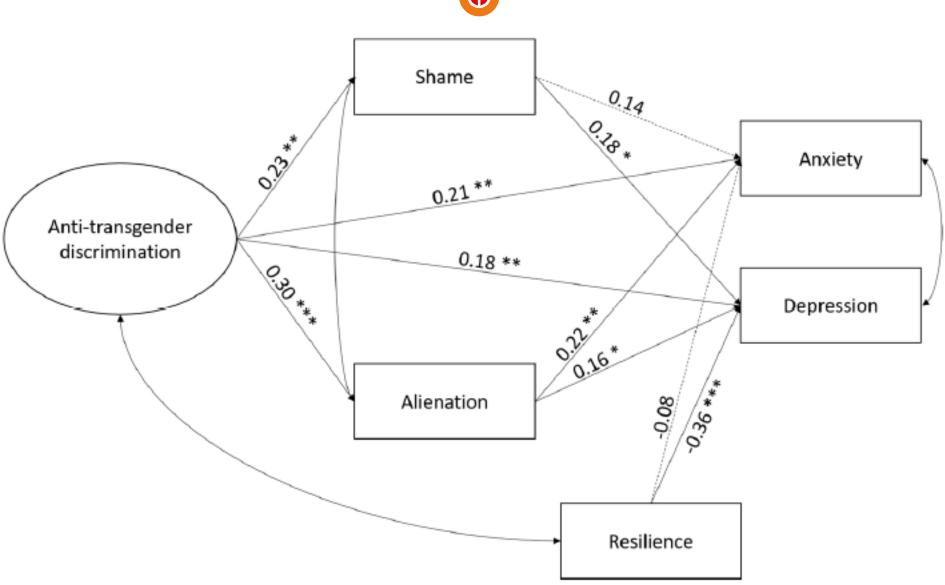
- Minority stress
  - Stigmatization/discrimination
  - Violence
- Internalized transphobia
- Resilience (=recovering, coping and adapting ability)
- Effects of risk factors >> effects of resilience

<sup>•</sup> Jäggi et al. (2018). Gender minority stress and depressive symptoms in transitioned swiss transpersons. BioMed research international, 2018.

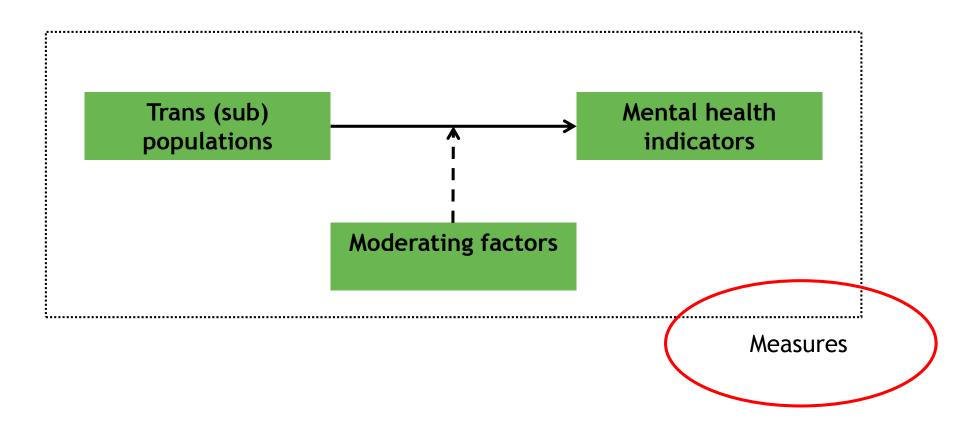
<sup>•</sup> McDowell et al. (2019). Risk and protective factors for mental health morbidity in a community sample of female-to-male (...). BMC psychiatry, 19(1), 16.

<sup>•</sup> Scandurra et al. (2018). Internalized transphobia, resilience, and (...). International journal of environmental research and public health, 15(3), 508.











### Transgender-specific outcome measures

- Gender Congruence Life Satisfaction Scale (Jones et al., 2018)
  - 38 questions on the past 6 months
  - <u>Scales</u>: genitalia, chest, other secondary sex characteristics, social gender role recognition, physical and emotional intimacy, psychological functioning, and life satisfaction
  - Good psychometric properties, control values published; open access
- GENDER-Q (Klassen et al., 2018)
  - Measure development to comprehensively evaluate quality of life and range of treatments
  - Treatments, body areas, physical, psychological, body image, sexual, social, etc.

<sup>•</sup> Jones et al. (2018). Development and validation of a new scale to measure outcomes from transgender health services: The Gender Congruence and Life Satisfaction Scale (GCLS). *International Journal of Transgenderism*. Online publication.

<sup>•</sup> Klassen et al. (2018). International phase I study protocol to develop a patient-reported outcome (...) (the GENDER-Q). BMJ open, 8(10), e025435.



### Conclusion

- Research on the moderating factors of mental health can provide multi-level interventions
  - Intrapersonal
  - Interpersonal
  - Societal
- Preferably using measures that are valid and sensitive to trans-specific topics



## Thank you for your attention

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