



Research Team Memorandum of Understanding

Mission and Aims

Version date: 17 April 2018

These Memorandum of Understanding documents are intended to guide the work of the Trans Youth CAN! Study. While each team member agrees in principle with the Memorandum of Understanding, it is considered a set of 'living documents', which may be revisited and revised throughout the life of our project.

Project Name:

Trans Youth CAN!

Formal Grant Title:

Transgender youth in clinical care: A pan-Canadian cohort study of medical, social and family outcomes

Description:

A pan-Canadian cohort study to understand the physical, mental and social health of youth who have been referred to specialists for endocrine treatment related to gender identity and expression issues, as well as the well-being of their parents/caregivers and families

Specific Objectives:

1. To characterize the sociodemographics and health of trans youth at referral, their pathways to care, and parent/caregiver characteristics;
2. To document the course of clinical processes/treatments (e.g. assessment, puberty suppression, hormones) and any sex/gender changes (e.g. gender identity, pubertal stage, dysphoria);
3. To assess medical, psychosocial, and family outcomes over a 2-year period;
4. To identify outcome determinants (e.g. regimen, pathways to care, age, gender, parent/caregiver support).
5. To chart the well-being of parents/caregivers of trans youth, where possible, as they and their families go through the process with their youth.

Goals:

Our ultimate end goal of this project is to have happy and healthy trans youth¹ and their families.

Our aim is to conduct a study of youth being seen at multiple clinics, who are followed over a 2-year period. Some of the things we are studying include: pathways to care, medical care received, medical outcomes (e.g. laboratory tests, growth), psychosocial outcomes (e.g. gender dysphoria, gender euphoria, anxiety, quality of life, social support, positive gender experiences), family functioning (general and trans-related), and parent well-being (e.g. psychological distress, social support). We will explore factors that allow for better support of the well-being of youth, parents/caregivers and families.

Results from this study will inform the conversation regarding medical care of trans youth. This study will follow youth on their journey, and will examine gender identity over time, and document decisions to initiate or discontinue medical care; we will also track changes in quality of life, school issues, and mental health. We will explore whether certain groups (ages, genders) are more likely to see improvements with care. Findings will also inform gender-affirming medical care, potentially impacting choice of regimen, timing and dosage. For example, we will compare outcomes among postpubertal youth prescribed puberty suppression treatment prior to cross-sex hormones vs. those treated directly with cross-sex hormones. Our research will also support more targeted social service provision; knowing how youth and parent/caregiver mental health and family functioning change over time will help providers to better support families as youth undergo medical care. We will produce findings in formats to reach different audiences: clinicians, social service providers, policy-makers, and of course trans youth and their families. The practical resources (web, pamphlets) we create will help trans youth, their parents, families and communities know what to expect when a youth undergoes gender-affirming medical care.

Guiding Principles of the Project:

- Support for **gender-affirming** models of care for trans youth
- A focus on examining the **social determinants of health**, and how social context affects health
- Inclusion of an **intersectionality framework**, a focus on differences between and within groups of trans youth and families, as well as an awareness of how power relationships shape experience
- Conducting a **community-informed** project that draws on lived experience to inform the research process and how results are used
- Our primary commitment is to the **health and well-being of trans youth and their families**

¹ Although language may change rapidly over time, Trans Youth CAN! is committed to always using gender-affirming language. We recognize the full range of gender diversity among youth who are receiving care in the clinics in our study, including Two Spirit and non-binary youth.