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for the Trans Youth CAN! Research Team

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Trans and non-binary youth may experience external stressors from gender-related social exclusion by family, friends, school or community. Additional stressors may be known only to parents or caregivers who try to shield their children from the words or actions of others. Similarly, youth may shield their parents/caregivers, producing different experiences of external stress for youth and parents/caregivers. Stressors include a range of experiences, such as being told one is a bad parent, having another family refuse to let their children come to the trans or non-binary youth's home, having to challenge school or extracurricular policies, investigation by child welfare authorities, or being asked not to participate in a religious organization.

Materials and Methods: We developed the Stressors on Families of Trans Youth Checklist (SFTYC) to capture information on 16 types of trans-related external stressors on families of trans and non-binary youth. It was derived from clinician, researcher, and parent report, with revision based on separate trans and non-binary youth and parent feedback groups (in English and French); group participants identified additional stressors and confirmed content validity. Youth and parent-caregiver versions of the SFTYC were administered in English or French as part of baseline data collection for Trans Youth CAN!, a pan-Canadian cohort study of youth referred for puberty suppression and/or hormone therapy. Eligible youth were aged from puberty to 15 years, and were attending their first visit after referral for puberty suppression and/or hormone therapy at one of eight clinics. Youth surveys were administered by a trained interviewer, and parent/caregiver surveys were self-completed.

Results: We will present preliminary results from youth and parent/caregiver surveys, including: 1) frequencies of experience for specific types of external stressors among youth and (separately) parents/caregivers; 2) a matched comparison of experiences reported by youth and their parents/caregivers; 3) an analysis of the number of stressor types reported, and; 4) an exploration of whether numbers or types of stressors varied by youth's age, binary or non-binary gender identity, immigration history, or other sociodemographic factors.

Conclusion: We present new results characterizing external stressors experienced by families of trans and non-binary youth from both youth and parent/caregiver perspectives.

BACKGROUND

We sought to capture the types of strains externally imposed on the families of trans and non-binary youth. These types of stressors may not be otherwise captured in general measures of discrimination. Documenting them will provide new data on frequency of experience, as well as allow for additional study of their effects on both youth and family well-being.

Trans and non-binary youth and their families may experience stressors from gender-related social exclusion by extended family, friends, school, or community. However, some of these stressors may be known only to parents or caregivers who try to shield their children from the harmful words or actions of others. Similarly, youth may also want to shield their parents/caregivers from some of the negative experiences they have had. Stressors include a range of experiences, such as parenting critique, having another family refuse to let their children come to the trans or non-binary youth's home, having to challenge school or extracurricular policies, investigation by child welfare authorities, or being excluded from a religious organization.

We sought to measure the types and frequencies of stressors on the families of trans and non-binary youth, and to investigate variation across demographic groups.

METHODS

- Youth are recruited at first referral visit for puberty suppression or gender-affirming hormone therapy at any of ten clinics in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, or Vancouver
- Eligibility criteria: age puberty to <16, able to complete interview in English or French
- Where possible, a parent or caregiver is also enrolled to complete the parent/caregiver surveys
- Data will be collected from youth via interviewer administered survey at baseline, 12 months, and 24 months, via brief online checklist at 3-month intervals, and via clinical case report form
- Data will be collected from parents/caregivers via self-completed online survey at baseline, 12 months, and 24 months
- The Stressors on Families of Trans Youth Checklist (SAFTYC) was designed (in English and French) based on expertise of team members, youth and parents
- Our team developed youth and parent/caregiver versions of a new Stressors on Families of Trans Youth Checklist (SFTYC), documenting 16 types of trans-specific experiences that families of trans youth may have
- Data presented here are for the first 73 youth and 69 parents/caregivers enrolled at baseline

RESULTS

- The most common experience reported by youth (42.5%) was that their family had to get involved in school regarding gender issues (Figure 1)
- In addition, at least 1 in 5 youth reported the following experiences: unwanted parenting advice from friends/family; other parents stopped letting their kids see you; family had to defend your right to use a washroom; others stopped letting you visit; friends/family told their parent they're a bad parent
- Parents/caregivers had similarly high reporting for these categories of experience, with the most common experience being receiving unwanted parenting advice from friends/family (50.7%)
- Youth and parents/caregivers differed slightly in their reporting, with parents/caregivers more likely to report receiving unwanted parenting advice from friends/family and having to defend the youth's right to use a washroom, and youth more likely to report having other parents stop letting their kids see them
- Youth reported uncertainty in answering items about experiences that primarily occur directly to their parent/caregiver (results not shown), though frequencies for three of the four items were similar for youth and their parents/caregivers
- Most youth and parents/caregivers experienced 4 or fewer stressors types of stressors (Table 1); about twice as many parents/caregivers reported experiencing 10+ stressors compared to youth
- The mean number of stressors experienced by youth did not differ significantly by gender, age category, or Indigeneity/immigration status (Table 2)

Figure 1. Stressors on the Families of Trans Youth

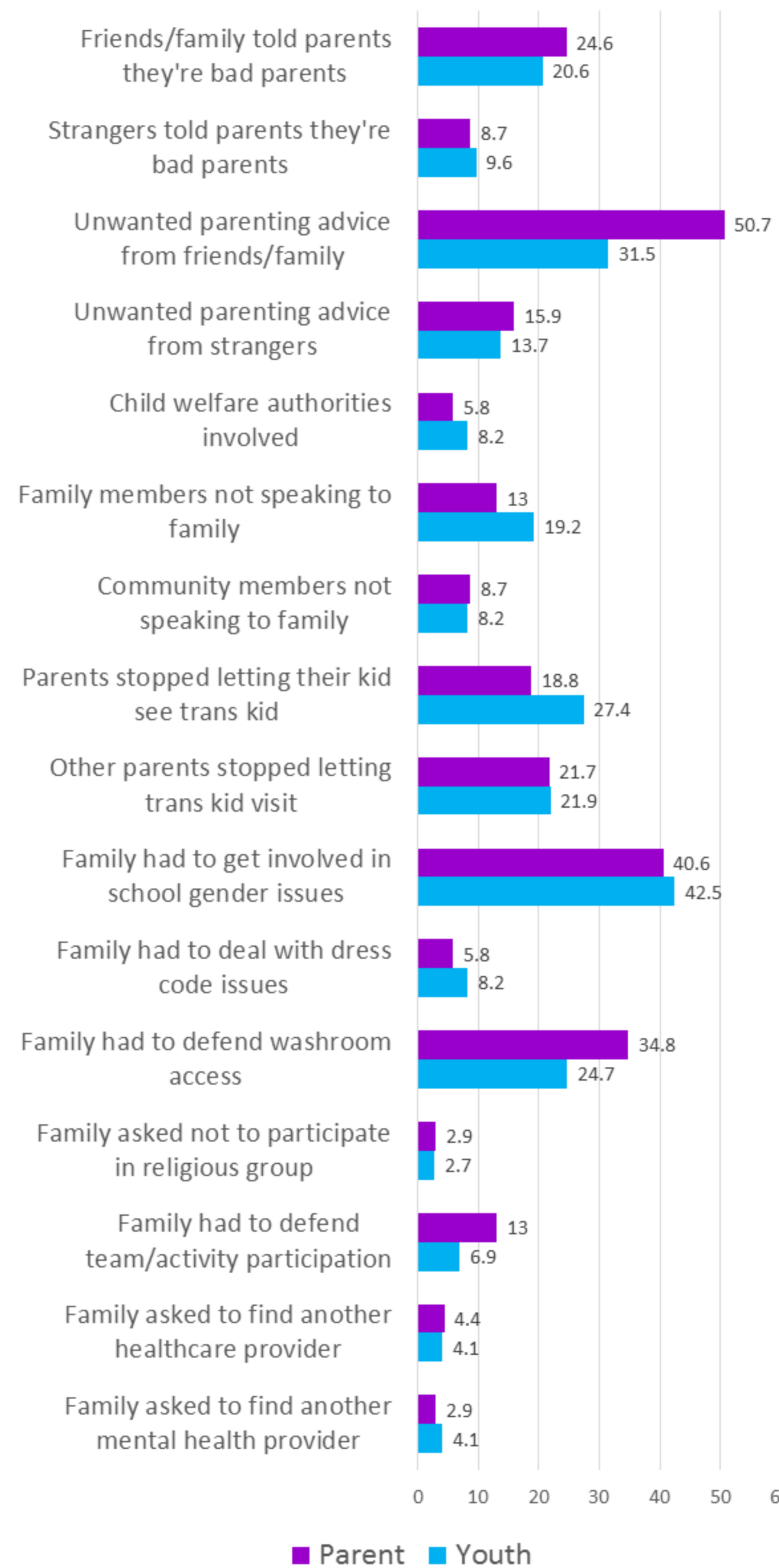


Table 1. Total Number of Stressors on the Families of Trans Youth

	Youth Report	Parent Report
	%	%
None	27.4	22.1
1	24.7	17.7
2-4	26.0	42.6
5-9	17.8	8.8
10+	4.1	8.8

KEY POINTS

- About 40% of youth had to have a family member get involved in school regarding gender issues
- Half of parents/caregivers received unwanted parenting advice from friends/family, with about one in four being told from friends/family they are a bad parent
 - Being told they are a bad parent or receiving unwanted parenting advice came more frequently from friends/family than from strangers
- Parents may be trying to shield their youth from negative experiences
 - Parents/caregivers indicated 10+ stressors twice as often as youth
 - Youth often reported uncertainty about experiences that happen to parents
 - Parents more frequently reported that they had received unwanted parenting advice from friends/family
- Although about one in four youth and parents reported experiencing none of the stressors, the majority experienced at least one type of gender-related strain externally imposed on the family
- Youth's age, gender, and Indigeneity/immigration status were not associated with the mean number of stressors they experienced

Table 2. Number of Stressors on the Families of Trans Youth: Sociodemographic Variation

	# Trans-specific family stressors	
	Mean	p
Age		0.13
10-13 years	3.35	
14-15 years	2.18	
Gender		0.37
Female/feminine	1.74	
Male/masculine	2.90	
Non-binary	2.33	
Indigeneity / Immigration		0.73
Indigenous	2.93	
Immigrant family	2.00	
Non-immigrant family	2.48	

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