BRIEF COMMUNICATION

Therapeutic Patient Education in Transgender Care

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ABSTRACT

This communication visits the concept of therapeutic patient education (TPE), and explores its relevance to transgender health care. It suggests a novel term, therapeutic education (TE), and defines it as "educational activities essential to the optimization of health, offered by health care providers duly trained in the field of education, designed to help a transgender individual (or a group of individuals and their families) to manage their treatment and prevent avoidable complications, while maintaining or improving their quality of life. It describes the soft and hard skills required for TE, and suggests a classification that can help in structuring TE programs.

Keywords: Gender affirmation, person-centered care, quality of life, transgender care, transgender health, therapeutic education

Therapeutic patient education (TPE) is a well-accepted concept that has found utility in the management of various chronic diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted the need to help health care providers acquire the competencies that are necessary to help patients self manage their chronic disease. TPE is defined as "education activities essential to the management of pathological conditions, managed by health care provides duly trained in the field of education, designed to help a patient (or a group of patients and their families) to manage their treatment and prevent avoidable complications, while keeping or improving their quality to life."[1] TPE provides a therapeutic effect additional to that produced by the other interventions, including pharmacological and nonpharmacological therapies.

REWORDING THE DEFINITION

While the definition of TPE in its present form serves the cause of chronic disease, such as diabetes mellitus, it is unsuited to transgender health. The words "pathological" and "patient" are not only inappropriate, but inaccurate as well, while describing the life of transgender persons.[2] Negating the relevance of TPE to transgender health, just because of these two words, however, is akin to throwing the baby out with the bath water. A more apt nomenclature may be therapeutic transgender person education, or simply, therapeutic education (TE).

From a transgender health perspective, TE is best defined as "educational activities essential to the optimization of health, offered by health care providers duly trained in the field of education, designed to help *a transgender individual (or group of individuals and their families)* to manage their treatment and prevent avoidable complications, while maintaining or improving their quality of life."

RELEVANCE

Transgender health is a complex science, which needs active participation from the transgender individual.[3] Learning about one's gender identify, navigating the health care ecosystem and society at large, as well as practicing necessary self-care activities, requires significant education.[4] This information and knowledge is best shared through TE.

COMPETENCIES

The competencies required for TE providers and diabetes patients have been described in detail.[1] Reference training programs must be crafted for health care providers, based upon robust educational principles and

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evidence-based medicine. These programs must sensitize them to the need for trans-friendly communication, and equip them with tools for effective teaching. Apart from these soft skills, hard skills such as psychological, social and legal support, as well as endocrine, psychiatric and surgical aspects of transgender care should be covered.

It may be apt to create a hierarchy of competencies required for transgender TE. Primary skills include those required for all transgender persons, such as how to navigate social, legal and health care knowledge related to gender affirmative interventions, while tertiary competencies are a label for information that may be needed for specific issues that impact a few people in an individualized manner

THE WAY FORWARD

The way forward is to integrate transgender health in medical, nursing and paramedical curricula and practice, as well as integrate TE in transgender health. Just as TPE has changed our approach to chronic disease management; a focus on TE will revolutionize our attitude to transgender health and transgender care.

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Multidisciplinary Experts Reach a Consensus on Ending COVID as Public Health Threat

According to a new article published by the *Press Trust of India*, specific efforts and resources will be required to save lives as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) continues to circulate among the Indian population. Other than saving lives through continued efforts and resources, a large panel of multidisciplinary experts from over 100 countries recommended five other actions to end coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a public health threat.

To develop a global consensus, a Delphi study was used, which included a panel of 386 academic, health, NGO, government and other experts from 112 countries and territories who took part in three rounds of structured consultation. The results of the study included a set of 41 statements and 57 recommendations across six major areas, namely communication, health systems, vaccination, prevention, treatment and care and inequities.

The top three consensus recommendations are a whole-of-society strategy that involves multiple disciplines, sectors and actors to avoid fragmented efforts; a whole-of-government approach to identify, review and address resilience in health systems to make them more responsive to people's needs; and a vaccines-plus approach that includes a combination of COVID-19 vaccination, other structural and behavioral prevention measures, treatment and financial support measures. Other recommendations published in the journal *Nature*, with at least 99% agreement, include communicating effectively with the public, rebuilding public trust and engaging communities in managing the pandemic response.

The study added that over 180 organizations from 72 countries have already endorsed the findings of the consensus study, which was led by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal). (*Source: https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/multidisciplinary-experts-across-countries-reach-consensus-on-ending-covid-as-public-health-threat/95301057*)