

The WPATH Files

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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PROGRESS**

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1. WHAT IS WPATH?

Established in 1979, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) is an international nonprofit organization consisting of almost 2,000 members. The group advocates for transgender people to have access to “gender-affirming care,” a treatment protocol involving hormones and surgeries, and, in the case of adolescents, puberty suppression. WPATH provides education, advocacy, and support for healthcare professionals involved in the care and treatment of transgender individuals.

WPATH publishes “Standards of Care,” a set of guidelines that offer recommendations for the provision of healthcare for transgender and gender-diverse individuals, which it claims are scientific and evidence-based. These guidelines cover various aspects of transgender health, including mental health, hormonal therapy, and surgical interventions.

2. WHO IS IN WPATH?

WPATH’s international membership is made up of medical and mental health professionals, as well as activists, experts in law and human rights, members of the transgender community, and anyone with an interest in gender medicine and trans rights. While non-professionals do not have voting privileges, in the past, members with no medical training have served as president.

3. HOW INFLUENTIAL IS WPATH?

WPATH’s Standards of Care influence the policies and position statements of many major medical groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, the Endocrine Society, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Lawmakers, judges, public and private health insurance providers, and national health services around the world rely on WPATH when making decisions on issues related to transgender healthcare.

Recent legislation on conversion therapy, including proposals [like the UK’s Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) on Conversion Therapy](#) and Canada’s 2022 ban on conversion therapy, merges sexual orientation and gender identity due to WPATH’s influence. This conflation leads to an inaccurate comparison between efforts to change someone’s sexual orientation and ethical psychotherapy focused on easing gender distress and fostering positive self-acceptance, thereby ultimately avoiding the necessity for lifelong medical interventions.

4. WHAT ARE THE WPATH FILES?

The WPATH Files are internal conversations from WPATH’s messaging forum and a video of an internal panel discussion leaked by a source or sources to Michael Shellenberger in 2023.

5. WHAT DO THE FILES REVEAL?

The WPATH Files reveal that WPATH is neither a medical organization nor a scientific organization. The group is engaging in an unregulated experiment on some of the most vulnerable individuals in society. The ethical and legal obligation of securing informed consent is being disregarded, and members show little concern for the potential long-term outcomes of patients. Awareness exists among members regarding the debilitating and potentially fatal side effects of experimental hormone therapies. There is evidence that members know puberty blockers are experimental and that young patients lack a comprehensive understanding of the long-term physical and psychological effects of hormonal and surgical interventions, making cognitive consent impossible.

The files also show that WPATH members are aware that adolescents are developmentally incapable of consenting to procedures resulting in fertility loss and that WPATH-affiliated doctors are knowingly conducting hormonal and surgical experiments on patients. Moreover, individuals with severe mental health issues are being permitted to consent to invasive, life-altering medical interventions without prior efforts to address their mental distress, violating true legal, informed consent because the patient's competence is in question. WPATH members are also aware of significant regret among young patients and a distinct lack of health literacy among their parents.

6. WHY ARE THE FILES IMPORTANT?

In medicine, there is a concept called the chain of trust. Doctors must be able to trust that their professional training is grounded in robust scientific evidence because, given the limited time available to medical professionals, it is not feasible for them to be experts in every specialty. For medicine to function safely, doctors must be confident that those who issue practice guidelines have diligently and rigorously evaluated all the relevant evidence for the safety and efficacy of treatments. The files are important because they show that WPATH has broken the chain of trust in gender medicine.

WPATH presents itself as scientific but is, as the files reveal, an advocacy group promoting risky, experimental, and cosmetic procedures in the guise of well-researched and “medically necessary” care. WPATH is held up as the source of all knowledge about gender-affirming care, but the scientific basis for their recommendations is exceptionally weak. Due to its outward appearance as a professional medical association, complete with a peer-reviewed journal and bibliography of scientific literature, the wider medical community places its trust in WPATH's “Standards of Care.” Further down the chain, parents and vulnerable patients trust the recommendations of their healthcare providers who are either themselves WPATH-affiliated or who look to their WPATH-influenced professional associations for guidance.

Therefore, revealing the truth about WPATH, as shown in the WPATH Files, is essential to restoring the public's trust, not just in gender medicine but also in the wider medical community. Vulnerable patients, and in the case of minors, their parents, deserve to know the truth about the organization that pushes “gender-affirming care” so that they are better equipped to make truly informed medical decisions.

7. ARE YOU CALLING FOR A TOTAL BAN ON HEALTHCARE FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE?

We are not calling for a ban on healthcare for transgender people; we are calling for better healthcare that is grounded in good quality evidence. We believe the transgender community deserves to be treated with respect, and that includes having access to the best available evidence-based treatments that prioritize their long-term health and quality of life.

8. WHY DO YOU RECOMMEND MEDICAL GROUPS AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS REJECT WPATH'S GUIDELINES?

WPATH's SOC8 is not evidence-based, and it is clinically unsafe. The guidelines are based on "consensus-based expert opinion," but notably only the opinion of experts who advocate for "gender-affirming care." For guidelines to be "evidence-based," an unbiased, thorough, systematic review of all the relevant scientific literature must be conducted, and the strength of the recommendations must be linked to the quality of the evidence. WPATH inaccurately states that a systematic review of the evidence for "gender-affirming care" for minors is not feasible due to limited evidence; however, Sweden, Finland, England, and the state of Florida have conducted such reviews, finding the evidence "insufficient and inconclusive." In fact, WPATH itself has also conducted such a review and found the evidence for cross-sex hormone therapy to be "low" and inconclusive, yet SOC8 asserts strong evidence supporting the benefits of gender-affirming treatments, including hormone therapy, contradicting their own findings.

Of further concern is WPATH's decision to remove almost all lower age requirements for puberty suppression, hormones, and surgeries, and the removal of the ethics chapter.

The conversations in the WPATH Files demonstrate that WPATH's SOC8 offers healthcare providers no actual guidance or oftentimes, conflicting guidance. Medical and mental health professionals adhering to WPATH's approach to gender medicine improvise and experiment on patients because the group's official "standards of care" lack clarity, are replete with contradictions, and are not grounded in robust scientific research or good-quality evidence. SOC8 contains no guidance on navigating difficult ethical decisions. An earlier draft did contain a chapter on ethics but this was removed from the final version. Overall, SOC8 is a substandard document for clinicians.

9. ARE THESE JUST A FEW ROGUE DOCTORS HAVING INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS IN THE FORUM WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF WPATH AS AN INSTITUTION? ISN'T THIS JUST HOW DOCTORS TALK IN PRIVATE?

In the modern era of advanced technology, healthcare professionals, including physicians and mental health clinicians, must adhere to the highest ethical standards in their interactions with patients, colleagues, and families. With the prevalence of videoconferencing, recorded meetings, instant messaging, and social media, clinicians are mindful that their words and presentations may be recorded and, thus, reflect the institutions they represent. Additionally, discussions about medical management outside of official records may be discoverable in medical malpractice actions, depending on the jurisdiction.

The WPATH Files reveal instances where WPATH-affiliated clinicians discuss specific patient cases and medical decision-making within their expertise. However, of notable concern, clinicians acknowledge issues such as lack of proper informed consent or potential serious health risks from hormone treatment but fail to demonstrate a sense of urgency in addressing these issues. Standard ethical medical practice requires clinicians to promptly address and rectify issues like insufficient informed consent or potential harm from treatments. The apparent lack of urgency in addressing significant health concerns in these files raises questions about the clinicians' commitment to the well-being of the patients under their care.