



Adolescent health brief

Chosen Name Use Is Linked to Reduced Depressive Symptoms, Suicidal Ideation, and Suicidal Behavior Among Transgender Youth

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Referred to by [The Importance of Getting the Name Right for Transgender and Other Gender Expansive Youth](#)

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Stanley R. Vance

Abstract

Purpose

This study aimed to examine the relation between chosen name use, as a proxy for youths' gender affirmation in various contexts, and mental health among transgender youth.

Methods

Data come from a community cohort sample of 129 transgender and gender nonconforming youth from three U.S. cities. We assessed chosen name use across multiple contexts and examined its association with depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior.

Results

After adjusting for personal characteristics and social support, chosen name use in more contexts was associated with lower depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior. Depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior were lowest when chosen names could be used in all four contexts.

Conclusion

For transgender youth who choose a name different from the one given at birth, use of their chosen name in multiple contexts affirms their gender identity and reduces mental health risks known to be high in this group.

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Methods

Data come from a community cohort sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth, and youth with same-sex attractions, recruited in three U.S. cities (one each in the Northeast, the Southwest, and the West Coast) between November 2011 and October 2012. The sample included 129 transgender and gender nonconforming youth (ages 15–21), 74 of whom reported a chosen name different from their name given at birth (participant characteristics provided in Table 1). ...

Results

There were no differences in depressive symptoms or suicidal behavior by personal characteristics including gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, age, access to free lunch, or study site. After adjusting for personal characteristics and total social support, chosen name use in more contexts predicted fewer depressive symptoms and less suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior (see Table 1). An increase by one context in which a chosen name could be used predicted a 5.37-unit decrease ...

Discussion

Transgender youth who were able to use their chosen names in multiple contexts reported fewer depressive symptoms and less suicidal ideation and behavior. For transgender youth who choose a name different from the name given at birth, use of their chosen name in multiple contexts appears to affirm their gender identity and lower mental health risks known to be high in this group. Despite the small number of youth in this study, it is one of the largest samples of transgender youth to date.

New ...

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no financial relationships relevant to this article to disclose.

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