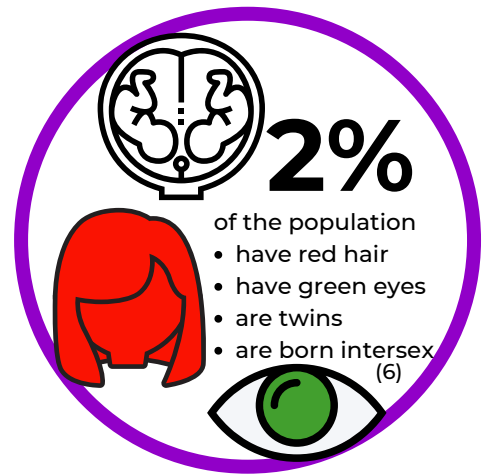


Intersex Mental Health

Intersex is an umbrella term for differences in sex traits and/or reproductive anatomy.

These variations can include differences in: chromosomes • external genitalia • hormone levels • internal reproductive organs • or other anatomy

Roughly 1 in 2,000 babies are born with variant enough intersex characteristics to "warrant" non-consensual cosmetic irreversible surgeries.⁽¹⁵⁾



53% of intersex adults report having fair or poor mental health.
61.1% depression • 62.2% anxiety • 40.9% PTSD⁽¹²⁾

Organizations around the globe have called for an end to cosmetic infant intersex surgeries, many declaring them to be a human rights violation.

Intersex advocacy groups advocate for the bodily autonomy of all intersex individuals.

^(5, 3, 13, 4, 2, 10, 11, 1, 6, 7, 8)



#Out4MentalHealth

In recent years, research has found what intersex activists have been advocating for years - that medically unnecessary cosmetic infant surgeries cause unnecessary harm to intersex individuals, and should be postponed until age of consent.

Mental Health

Research shows that intersex adults face statistically significant poor physical and mental health as compared to the general population. 43% reported having fair or poor physical health, as compared to 17.7% of the general population (12). Reports of suicidality and self-harm are comparable to individuals who have been victims of physical and sexual abuse, with 31.8% having attempted suicide (12, 14).

The American Psychological Association (APA) have denounced cosmetic procedures on intersex infants due to a lack of evidence as to the "long-term quality of life, reproductive functioning, and body satisfaction" of intersex individuals (2). Though these surgeries have become common practice since the 1960's, there is a lack of research as to the effectiveness of these cosmetic surgical interventions (15). The APA have also cited the stigma surrounding intersex variations, in addition to non-consensual surgeries, as contributing factors to the elevated levels of physical, psychological, and emotional disparities experienced by intersex individuals (2, 9, 16).

Policy Advocacy

The California State Legislature approved Resolution No. 110 that called for "policies and procedures that ensure individualized, multidisciplinary care that respects the rights of the patient ... [to] defer medical or surgical intervention, as warranted, until the child is able to participate in decision making" (13). Despite the passing of this resolution, SB 201, a bill that would have banned cosmetic surgeries on infants, failed in the California Senate committee the following year in January 2019. This was a failure to support the intersex community. In 2021, SB 225 would prohibit non-medically necessary surgery on children under 6 years old, therein providing protections for intersex children.

Outdated and harmful cisnormative and heteronormative medical advice needs to become obsolete. Bodily autonomy of every individual should always be prioritized, and intersex individuals have been denied this for far too long.

Recommendations

- LGBTQ+ organizations should advocate for policy reform that protects the rights of intersex individuals.
 - LGBTQ+ organizations should advocate for the banning of cosmetic intersex surgeries.
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