



Primary Headaches In Transgender Men: A Pilot Study

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Introduction

The prevalence of headaches in transgender individuals using crossed hormone replacement therapy is not well established in the literature.

Objectives

To compare the frequency, characteristics, and impact of headaches among transgender men on gender-affirming hormone therapy and cisgender men.

Methods

This was a case-control study carried out at the Hospital das Clínicas of the Federal University of Pernambuco (HC-UFPE). Cases: 25 transgender men, aged 18 years or older and undergoing hormone replacement therapy for reassurance. Controls: 25 age-matched cisgender men with the case group. Exclusion criteria were: individuals with a history of anabolic hormone use, transgender men during pregnancy, and cisgender men diagnosed with hypogonadism. Participants were interviewed by resident physicians and trained medical students. A semi-structured questionnaire, the Headache Impact Test (HIT-6), and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale were used. The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of HC-UFPE (CAAE: 58822022.2.0000.8807 / number: 5.509.844).

Results

We included 50 individuals, 25 of whom were transgender men. The median age of transgender men was 30 years (25; 36) and 32 years (26; 40) for cisgender men (Mann-Whitney; $p=0.49$). There was no difference in the prevalence of headache in the last 12 months, the prevalence of migraine, or the frequency of headache between the two groups. Transgender men had more severe (Mann-Whitney; $p=0.005$) and more impactful headaches (chi-square; $p=0.002$), lower prevalence of tension-type headache (chi-square; $p=0.025$), and higher prevalence of anxiety (chi-square; $p=0.021$) and depression (chi-square; $p<0.001$) when compared to cisgender men.

Conclusion

Transgender men have more severe, high-impact headaches and less tension-type headache than cisgender men.

Keywords: Transgender Persons, Headache, Tension-Type Headache, Migraine Disorders