

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2017 10:58
To: Nuno.Nodin@rhul.ac.uk
Subject: PACE RaRe study: Transgender questions

Dear Dr Nudin,

I have recently read the RaRe research study that you conducted and am very interested in the results regarding the rate of suicides for transgender people. This study is hugely influential in the debate to enhance transgender rights and protections and I have a few technical questions that I hope you could help answer for me to help me in my discussions with others about transgender issues.

1) 2078 people were asked to complete a survey looking into LGBT issues in which a number of questions about suicide were asked. However when looking specifically at the responses by people that identify as transgender, the publication only shows the data from a subset of people that were 26 years old or under. This 'young' subset included 485 people of which only 27 were transgender. It is sometimes criticised that 27 is a very small number of people from which to draw big conclusions. What were the results from the whole group (i.e. all 2078)? This larger subset includes the experiences of 120 transgender people and would be a very useful figure to know and may be more persuasive in my arguments.

2) In the 26 year old and under data set there were 13 trans people who report having attempted suicide in the past. However, you do not report when their past suicide occurred. Was it before they transitioned or after they transitioned?

3) You also do not report whether these 13 young trans people consider themselves gay or straight. Other data from the study shows that people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide than those who identify as straight (34% compared to 18%). This data is very convincing because it includes 289 LGB and 196 straight people. Seeing as LGB is clearly a risk factor for attempting suicide then it would be relevant to know if the trans people were gay or straight. If the majority of them were gay whereas the majority of the cis-gender comparators were straight then this may have skewed the data making it look like a trans-related increase in suicide when actually it just reflects the fact they were gay. Were you able to control for this potential bias?

Any answers you can give to my questions will be very much appreciated. The rights of transgender people are important and as a member of the LGBT community myself I am very interested in data like this.

Best wishes,
Dr Nicola Williams

From: Nodin, Nuno [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 March 2017 14:21
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: PACE RaRe study: Transgender questions

Dear Nicola

My most sincere apologies for my very delayed reply to your email. Things are finally quieting down a bit for me with the term coming to an end this week, so I've made a priority of replying to you now.

1) We only reported data for the young people's suicide indicators as this was the age group that was defined by the project's specifications. However, you are right in that we collected the same data for all of our sample, including for the 120 all ages trans-identified participants. I remember we ran descriptive and there were similarly high numbers of attempted suicides amongst this larger subset. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find these reports in my old files but I will continue to look and I will share them with you once I find them.

2) I'm afraid we did not collect data about transition (trans identity was self-declared, therefore some participants may identify as trans without having an intention of undergoing a transition)

3) I agree with you that sexual orientation is a possible confounder in respect of the suicide attempt indicators for the trans identified participants. We were unable at the time of preparing the report (due to various pressures of time and capacity) to go into deeper levels of analysis of our data that would allow us, among other things, to control for sexual orientation when studying the findings for the trans identified participants. Some challenges, chiefly the closure of PACE early last year, meant that some of that work (which was planned) had to be put on hold and is now slowly starting to be done.

Again my apologies for the delay in the reply. Do let me know if you have any other questions that I may be able to reply about the RaRe Research.

Best wishes
Nuno Nodin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 April 2017 23:34
To: Nodin, Nuno
Subject: Re: PACE RaRe study: Transgender questions

Thank you very much for sparing the time to reply.

Based on the potential confounding issues and low number of trans people under 26 would you agree that this research is inconclusive or at best a preliminary indicator? It has been troubling me for a while that this data is being used to make substantial claims in the debate concerning the transitioning of gender dysphoric children and is being used to influence government policy. The fear that their child will commit suicide unless they transition is a key factor that drives parents to support social transition and use of puberty blockers. I have often heard it said 'better a trans child than a dead child'. I am also concerned that your data is often misrepresented to suggest that the evidence is much stronger than it is. For example the transgender charity Mermaids has said on multiple occasions that the suicide data was based on over 2000 participants when in fact it was just 27, clearly misrepresenting your work. I have enclosed the Telegraph article from 29th November 2016 and a blog post discussing the misuse of your data at a transgender conference also in 2016.

So, I'm just wondering what your thoughts are about this and whether you could in some way help to put the record straight about your research. Its important that any progress and changes in this area are science based, particularly as it involves the well being of children, and your voice would be an influential and credible one.

Best wishes,
Nicola

From: Nodin, Nuno [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 June 2017 10:37
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: PACE RaRe study: Transgender questions

Dear Nicola

Apologies for the delayed reply.

It is indeed unfortunate that the findings from the RaRE study have been misinterpreted, even when this is something that happens often when research is used by non-scientists in the context of their own agendas. I have always tried to clarify the nature and breadth of the RaRE findings whenever this has come to my attention and will of course continue to do so.

Best wishes
Nuno