

From Pre-op to Post-op: Unmasking Bias in Gender Affirming Care

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Background

In the current climate, gender affirming care has become a focal point of national debate. With the current challenges, gender affirming care remains a lifesaving and evidence-based practice. With increasing restrictions of care, advocating for and protecting access to this type of care is becoming a matter of public health.

Although there is growing awareness of implicit bias, these thoughts often influence patient-provider interactions in several ways. These biases may lead to mistrust, misgendering, and discomfort throughout a patient's experience in the perianesthesia and perioperative setting. When patients do not feel comfortable, they may not seek further treatment. Providers must learn and understand that their actions towards this population may have profound effects.

Staff at East Hospital have worked with patients undergoing gender-affirming care and realized that they had their own biases about these patients. Through self-reflection and review of literature, they grew to understand the need for gender affirming care as well as understanding the biases they held for different populations.



Literature Review

- According to Gleasman-DeSimone (2023), implicit bias in healthcare can lead to a patient's death and this can be due to not recognizing the bias.
- Gleasman-DiSimone (2023) also noted that not all people have the same opportunities to practice a healthy lifestyle nor do they receive the same type of healthcare. This is important as several genders do face some type of discrimination.
- The health disparities that the transgender community experiences needs to be acknowledged and providers should be informed of care to improve health care outcomes (O'Shea & Foran, 2024).
- Health equity is a strong focus in Healthy People 2030.



Lessons Learned

- Implicit biases can affect the way you care for your patients as well as shape your interactions with co-workers
- It is important to understand our own implicit bias thoughts when interacting with others.
- We will never know what each patient has gone through, so it is important to treat our patients equitably.



Recommendation and Next Steps

- Staff should continue to engage in culturally appropriate care education to ensure they are aware of potential needs of patient demographics
- Implicit bias training would benefit the team members and can be conducted with our leadership team
- Care should be personalized and provided without any bias.
- Help staff members self-reflect on their own bias.

Test your own Implicit Bias

- There are several online tests that can be taken to review your own implicit bias.
- To test your own implicit bias, we suggest utilizing the Project Implicit test which can be found here:



- Please be aware that you may not agree with your results

References

Gleasman-DeSimone, S. L. (2023). Identifying and Addressing Bias in Nursing Teaching: A Creative Controversy Essay. *Nursing Forum*, 2023, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/3459527>

O'Shea, O., & Foran, P. (2024). Nursing implications for transgender and gender diverse perioperative patients: A discussion paper. *Journal of Perioperative Nursing*, 37(1), e-48-e-53. <https://doi.org/10.26550/2209-1092.1319>