

Department of Politics

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORM

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Name:

E-mail address:

MSc or MRes programme: MRes Social Research and Gender & Sexuality

Full-time or part-time: Part-time

Title of proposed dissertation: Understanding the mental health impacts of hormone treatment being discontinued (or the threat of this) for trans patients. I plan to come up with a more snappy/catchy title!

Description of subject area:

The current situation surrounding trans health care in the UK is very concerning. Waiting times to see specialists are currently at over 2 years, considerably above the NHS recommended time of 18 weeks. Once a trans person has received a hormone prescription from a specialist GIC (Gender Identity Clinic), their prescription is supposed to be transferred over to their GP.

I am planning to explore the impacts on mental health of trans people in the UK who, upon moving to GP care after seeing a GIC or switching GPs, have found their hormone treatment discontinued. The dissertation will also explore the narrative of gender-affirming hormone treatment being declined on the grounds of being 'off-license' (being used for a purpose other than that which it was manufactured or trialled for).

I think there are several factors that could be underpinning this, namely institutional transphobia, and a lack of education and awareness around trans people's needs. I am interested in finding out what changes trans patients would like to see, and how they as service users can feedback into and improve the system.

I am trans myself and have experienced problems accessing my hormone treatment after switching GP. The distress this caused and the frustration at a healthcare system that does not know how to adequately meet the needs of trans patients is what has inspired me to pursue this subject for my dissertation.

What scholarly literature will you be examining?

I will be looking at the work of Dr Ruth Pearce and Dr Ben Vincent, both of whom write about trans health and healthcare. I will also be examining some qualitative studies involving trans people and their care, including the work of CliniQ, 56T, Galop, Stonewall, and other LGBTQ+ organisations.

I also plan to use the World Professional Association for Transgender Health literature and NHS literature to compare what ought to be happening with what is actually happening.

What primary research material might you use?

I am planning to combine autoethnographic and interview approaches in this work. This is an experience I have had, so that will be my starting point. I already have some ideas of who I can reach out to for the interviews, as well as links with a GP who is willing to discuss the prescribing side of things with me.

My current plan is to interview trans people who have experienced problems with their hormone prescriptions, and then hold a focus group with those participants to discuss how improvements could be made.

I recognise that it might be too much to have autoethnographic material, interviews, and a focus group, and so I would appreciate help from my supervisor to decide what feels like a manageable amount.

Have you identified or spoken with a potential supervisor? If so, who?

As far as I understand, people on my course need to choose a supervisor from the History department. I think that either Sarah Marks, Matt Cook, or Ruth Beecher might be a good fit, but I have not reached out to any of them at this stage.

What is most important for me is to have a supervisor who is aware of some of the issues trans people face and is supportive of trans people, rather than someone who is a medical expert in this area. I think it would also be beneficial to have a supervisor who has experience with interviews as a methodology.