

## Differential Diagnosis

Many of the conditions that could be differential diagnoses for pedophilic disorder also sometimes occur as comorbid diagnoses. It is therefore generally necessary to evaluate the evidence for pedophilic disorder and other possible conditions as separate questions.

**Antisocial personality disorder.** This disorder increases the likelihood that a person who is primarily attracted to the mature physique will approach a child, on one or a few occasions, on the basis of relative availability. The individual often shows other signs of this personality disorder, such as recurrent law-breaking.

**Alcohol and substance use disorders.** The disinhibiting effects of intoxication may also increase the likelihood that a person who is primarily attracted to the mature physique will sexually approach a child.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder.** There are occasional individuals who complain about ego-dystonic thoughts and worries about possible attraction to children. Clinical interviewing usually reveals an absence of sexual thoughts about children during high states of sexual arousal (e.g., approaching orgasm during masturbation) and sometimes additional ego-dystonic, intrusive sexual ideas (e.g., concerns about homosexuality).

## Comorbidity

Psychiatric comorbidity of pedophilic disorder includes substance use disorders; depressive, bipolar, and anxiety disorders; antisocial personality disorder; and other paraphilic disorders. However, findings on comorbid disorders are largely among individuals convicted for sexual offenses involving children (almost all males) and may not be generalizable to other individuals with pedophilic disorder (e.g., individuals who have never approached a child sexually but who qualify for the diagnosis of pedophilic disorder on the basis of subjective distress).

## Fetishistic Disorder

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### Diagnostic Criteria

**302.81 (F65.0)**

- A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent and intense sexual arousal from either the use of nonliving objects or a highly specific focus on nongenital body part(s), as manifested by fantasies, urges, or behaviors.
- B. The fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- C. The fetish objects are not limited to articles of clothing used in cross-dressing (as in transvestic disorder) or devices specifically designed for the purpose of tactile genital stimulation (e.g., vibrator).

**Specify:**

**Body part(s)**

**Nonliving object(s)**

**Other**

**Specify if:**

**In a controlled environment:** This specifier is primarily applicable to individuals living in institutional or other settings where opportunities to engage in fetishistic behaviors are restricted.

**In full remission:** There has been no distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning for at least 5 years while in an uncontrolled environment.

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## Specifiers

Although individuals with fetishistic disorder may report intense and recurrent sexual arousal to inanimate objects or a specific body part, it is not unusual for non-mutually exclusive combinations of fetishes to occur. Thus, an individual may have fetishistic disorder associated with an inanimate object (e.g., female undergarments) or an exclusive focus on an intensely eroticized body part (e.g., feet, hair), or their fetishistic interest may meet criteria for various combinations of these specifiers (e.g., socks, shoes and feet).

## Diagnostic Features

The paraphilic focus of fetishistic disorder involves the persistent and repetitive use of or dependence on nonliving objects or a highly specific focus on a (typically nongenital) body part as primary elements associated with sexual arousal (Criterion A). A diagnosis of fetishistic disorder must include clinically significant personal distress or psychosocial role impairment (Criterion B). Common fetish objects include female undergarments, male or female footwear, rubber articles, leather clothing, or other wearing apparel. Highly eroticized body parts associated with fetishistic disorder include feet, toes, and hair. It is not uncommon for sexualized fetishes to include both inanimate objects and body parts (e.g., dirty socks and feet), and for this reason the definition of fetishistic disorder now re-incorporates *partialism* (i.e., an exclusive focus on a body part) into its boundaries. Partialism, previously considered a paraphilia not otherwise specified disorder, had historically been subsumed in fetishism prior to DSM-III.

Many individuals who self-identify as fetishist practitioners do not necessarily report clinical impairment in association with their fetish-associated behaviors. Such individuals could be considered as having a fetish but not fetishistic disorder. A diagnosis of fetishistic disorder requires concurrent fulfillment of both the behaviors in Criterion A and the clinically significant distress or impairment in functioning noted in Criterion B.

## Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Fetishistic disorder can be a multisensory experience, including holding, tasting, rubbing, inserting, or smelling the fetish object while masturbating, or preferring that a sexual partner wear or utilize a fetish object during sexual encounters. Some individuals may acquire extensive collections of highly desired fetish objects.

## Development and Course

Usually paraphilias have an onset during puberty, but fetishes can develop prior to adolescence. Once established, fetishistic disorder tends to have a continuous course that fluctuates in intensity and frequency of urges or behavior.

## Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

Knowledge of and appropriate consideration for normative aspects of sexual behavior are important factors to explore to establish a clinical diagnosis of fetishistic disorder and to distinguish a clinical diagnosis from a socially acceptable sexual behavior.

## Gender-Related Diagnostic Issues

Fetishistic disorder has not been systematically reported to occur in females. In clinical samples, fetishistic disorder is nearly exclusively reported in males.

## Functional Consequences of Fetishistic Disorder

Typical impairments associated with fetishistic disorder include sexual dysfunction during romantic reciprocal relationships when the preferred fetish object or body part is

unavailable during foreplay or coitus. Some individuals with fetishistic disorder may prefer solitary sexual activity associated with their fetishistic preference(s) even while involved in a meaningful reciprocal and affectionate relationship.

Although fetishistic disorder is relatively uncommon among arrested sexual offenders with paraphilic disorders, males with fetishistic disorder may steal and collect their particular fetishistic objects of desire. Such individuals have been arrested and charged for nonsexual antisocial behaviors (e.g., breaking and entering, theft, burglary) that are primarily motivated by the fetishistic disorder.

## Differential Diagnosis

**Transvestic disorder.** The nearest diagnostic neighbor of fetishistic disorder is transvestic disorder. As noted in the diagnostic criteria, fetishistic disorder is not diagnosed when fetish objects are limited to articles of clothing exclusively worn during cross-dressing (as in transvestic disorder), or when the object is genitally stimulating because it has been designed for that purpose (e.g., a vibrator).

**Sexual masochism disorder or other paraphilic disorders.** Fetishes can co-occur with other paraphilic disorders, especially "sadomasochism" and transvestic disorder. When an individual fantasizes about or engages in "forced cross-dressing" and is primarily sexually aroused by the domination or humiliation associated with such fantasy or repetitive activity, the diagnosis of sexual masochism disorder should be made.

**Fetishistic behavior without fetishistic disorder.** Use of a fetish object for sexual arousal without any associated distress or psychosocial role impairment or other adverse consequence would not meet criteria for fetishistic disorder, as the threshold required by Criterion B would not be met. For example, an individual whose sexual partner either shares or can successfully incorporate his interest in caressing, smelling, or licking feet or toes as an important element of foreplay would not be diagnosed with fetishistic disorder; nor would an individual who prefers, and is not distressed or impaired by, solitary sexual behavior associated with wearing rubber garments or leather boots.

## Comorbidity

Fetishistic disorder may co-occur with other paraphilic disorders as well as hypersexuality. Rarely, fetishistic disorder may be associated with neurological conditions.

## Transvestic Disorder

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### Diagnostic Criteria

**302.3 (F65.1)**

- A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent and intense sexual arousal from cross-dressing, as manifested by fantasies, urges, or behaviors.
- B. The fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

**Specify if:**

**With fetishism:** If sexually aroused by fabrics, materials, or garments.

**With autogynephilia:** If sexually aroused by thoughts or images of self as female.

**Specify if:**

**In a controlled environment:** This specifier is primarily applicable to individuals living in institutional or other settings where opportunities to cross-dress are restricted.

**In full remission:** There has been no distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning for at least 5 years while in an uncontrolled environment.

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## Specifiers

The presence of fetishism decreases the likelihood of gender dysphoria in men with transvestic disorder. The presence of autogynephilia increases the likelihood of gender dysphoria in men with transvestic disorder.

## Diagnostic Features

The diagnosis of transvestic disorder does not apply to all individuals who dress as the opposite sex, even those who do so habitually. It applies to individuals whose cross-dressing or thoughts of cross-dressing are always or often accompanied by sexual excitement (Criterion A) and who are emotionally distressed by this pattern or feel it impairs social or interpersonal functioning (Criterion B). The cross-dressing may involve only one or two articles of clothing (e.g., for men, it may pertain only to women's undergarments), or it may involve dressing completely in the inner and outer garments of the other sex and (in men) may include the use of women's wigs and make-up. Transvestic disorder is nearly exclusively reported in males. Sexual arousal, in its most obvious form of penile erection, may co-occur with cross-dressing in various ways. In younger males, cross-dressing often leads to masturbation, following which any female clothing is removed. Older males often learn to avoid masturbating or doing anything to stimulate the penis so that the avoidance of ejaculation allows them to prolong their cross-dressing session. Males with female partners sometimes complete a cross-dressing session by having intercourse with their partners, and some have difficulty maintaining a sufficient erection for intercourse without cross-dressing (or private fantasies of cross-dressing).

Clinical assessment of distress or impairment, like clinical assessment of transvestic sexual arousal, is usually dependent on the individual's self-report. The pattern of behavior "purging and acquisition" often signifies the presence of distress in individuals with transvestic disorder. During this behavioral pattern, an individual (usually a man) who has spent a great deal of money on women's clothes and other apparel (e.g., shoes, wigs) discards the items (i.e., purges them) in an effort to overcome urges to cross-dress, and then begins acquiring a woman's wardrobe all over again.

## Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Transvestic disorder in men is often accompanied by *autogynephilia* (i.e., a male's paraphilic tendency to be sexually aroused by the thought or image of himself as a woman). Autogynophilic fantasies and behaviors may focus on the idea of exhibiting female physiological functions (e.g., lactation, menstruation), engaging in stereotypically feminine behavior (e.g., knitting), or possessing female anatomy (e.g., breasts).

## Prevalence

The prevalence of transvestic disorder is unknown. Transvestic disorder is rare in males and extremely rare in females. Fewer than 3% of males report having ever been sexually aroused by dressing in women's attire. The percentage of individuals who have cross-dressed with sexual arousal more than once or a few times in their lifetimes would be even lower. The majority of males with transvestic disorder identify as heterosexual, although some individuals have occasional sexual interaction with other males, especially when they are cross-dressed.

## Development and Course

In males, the first signs of transvestic disorder may begin in childhood, in the form of strong fascination with a particular item of women's attire. Prior to puberty, cross-dressing produces generalized feelings of pleasurable excitement. With the arrival of puberty, dressing in women's clothes begins to elicit penile erection and, in some cases, leads di-

rectly to first ejaculation. In many cases, cross-dressing elicits less and less sexual excitement as the individual grows older; eventually it may produce no discernible penile response at all. The desire to cross-dress, at the same time, remains the same or grows even stronger. Individuals who report such a diminution of sexual response typically report that the sexual excitement of cross-dressing has been replaced by feelings of comfort or well-being.

In some cases, the course of transvestic disorder is continuous, and in others it is episodic. It is not rare for men with transvestic disorder to lose interest in cross-dressing when they first fall in love with a woman and begin a relationship, but such abatement usually proves temporary. When the desire to cross-dress returns, so does the associated distress.

Some cases of transvestic disorder progress to gender dysphoria. The males in these cases, who may be indistinguishable from others with transvestic disorder in adolescence or early childhood, gradually develop desires to remain in the female role for longer periods and to feminize their anatomy. The development of gender dysphoria is usually accompanied by a (self-reported) reduction or elimination of sexual arousal in association with cross-dressing.

The manifestation of transvestism in penile erection and stimulation, like the manifestation of other paraphilic as well as normophilic sexual interests, is most intense in adolescence and early adulthood. The severity of transvestic disorder is highest in adulthood, when the transvestic drives are most likely to conflict with performance in heterosexual intercourse and desires to marry and start a family. Middle-age and older men with a history of transvestism are less likely to present with transvestic disorder than with gender dysphoria.

## Functional Consequences of Transvestic Disorder

Engaging in transvestic behaviors can interfere with, or detract from, heterosexual relationships. This can be a source of distress to men who wish to maintain conventional marriages or romantic partnerships with women.

## Differential Diagnosis

**Fetishistic disorder.** This disorder may resemble transvestic disorder, in particular, in men with fetishism who put on women's undergarments while masturbating with them. Distinguishing transvestic disorder depends on the individual's specific thoughts during such activity (e.g., are there any ideas of being a woman, being like a woman, or being dressed as a woman?) and on the presence of other fetishes (e.g., soft, silky fabrics, whether these are used for garments or for something else).

**Gender dysphoria.** Individuals with transvestic disorder do not report an incongruence between their experienced gender and assigned gender nor a desire to be of the other gender; and they typically do not have a history of childhood cross-gender behaviors, which would be present in individuals with gender dysphoria. Individuals with a presentation that meets full criteria for transvestic disorder as well as gender dysphoria should be given both diagnoses.

## Comorbidity

Transvestism (and thus transvestic disorder) is often found in association with other paraphilic disorders. The most frequently co-occurring paraphilic disorders are fetishism and masochism. One particularly dangerous form of masochism, *autoerotic asphyxia*, is associated with transvestism in a substantial proportion of fatal cases.