

GTTrans: estratégia de aproximação dos múltiplos saberes sobre a saúde integral das pessoas trans em uma Universidade Pública

GTtrans: múltiple estrategia de abordaje de conocimientos sobre la salud general de las personas trans en una universidad pública

**GTTrans: multiple knowledge approach strategy on the overall health of trans people in a public university**

Jose Humberto Guimarães Santos<sup>1</sup>

Kelly Silva<sup>2</sup>

Priscilla Daiana Figueiredo Souza<sup>3</sup>

Rodrigo Dornelas<sup>4</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** Transsexualism is still perceived as a personality disorder by classificatory systems of disease, especially by the American Psychiatric Association. In order to reflect on this classification, as well as provide care issues in health trans people, the group continued “GTTrans: Transsexuality in the agenda” came into the Extension Project on health of trans person. Open for all internal and external community to the university, it was proposed that the meeting would be an opportunity to meet the specific and general needs of transgender people in health services, proposing improvements in care network involved with the university.

**Keywords:** Transsexuality; Access to Health Services; Needs and demands on health services.

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1 Graduando em Medicina pela Universidade Federal de Sergipe – Campus Prof Antonio Garcia Filho. Email: [josehumbertoguimaraes@gmail.com](mailto:josehumbertoguimaraes@gmail.com).

2 Universidade Federal de Sergipe - Campus Prof Antonio Garcia Filho. Email: [kelly.fonoufs@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.fonoufs@gmail.com)

3 Universidade Federal de Sergipe - Campus Prof Antonio Garcia Filho. Email: [lanadoza@yahoo.com.br](mailto:lanadoza@yahoo.com.br)

4 Universidade Federal de Sergipe - Campus Prof Antonio Garcia Filho. Email: [odrigodornela@uol.com.br](mailto:odrigodornela@uol.com.br)

## Introduction

The ordinance nº 2.836<sup>1</sup> establishes the Política Nacional de Saúde Integral de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transexuais - National Policy on Integral Health of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals (LGBT) – and present as its guideline the respect for LGBT human rights. It contributes for the elimination of stigma and discrimination arising from homophobia, lesbophobia, gayfobia, biphobia, travestiphobia and transphobia, considered social determinants of health, by influencing people's quality of life, directly in the occurrence of health problems.

The Transexualization Process, carried out by the SUS - Brazilian public Health system -, established by the ordinances No. 1.7072 and No. 457<sup>3</sup> of August 2008 and extended by the Ordinance No. 2.803<sup>4</sup>, of November 19, 2013, aims to guarantee the integral health care to transgender people. However, there are still elements, for example, prejudice, associated with the lack of preparation of health professionals, which impairs the Health care. Such characteristics can be justified by the absence of academic spaces to discuss gender and, specifically, the necessary health care for this population.

Thus, in order to minimize the gap in the training of these professionals related to the health of transgender people, the study group “GTTrans: Transexualidade em pauta” (Transsexuality on the agenda) was created. The objective of the group is to train students and the local population interested in the theme about the health needs of transgender people. Educational actions aimed at health professionals, professors and students were promoted.

The meetings take place on a monthly basis, with an average duration of two hours, and the discussions and reflections proposed have as a guideline the National LGBT Integral Health Policy. They focus on the following aspects: discussion of concepts related to gender identity, such as transgender people (transsexuals / transvestites) and functionality (Crossdressers, Drag queen / king and transformist); strategies to promote improvements in transgender access to public health services; training of health professionals, professors and students to address the specific needs of transgender people in accessing health services.

The present experience report aims to present the discussions developed in the GTTrans, so that it can subsidize other spaces and educational institutions on the specific needs of the transgender people. It also can disclose the mechanism used in the attempt to extinguish the prejudice and its negative impact on the health care of these people.

## Development

The “GTTrans: Transexualidade em pauta” appeared as a proposal for intervention in the health

graduations of the University Campus “Prof. Antônio Garcia Filho”, from the Federal University of Sergipe - UFS - in the city of Lagarto. Within the pedagogical projects of the courses, it can be observed that little or nothing is discussed about gender issues and their impacts on social health determinations. The campus has an innovative profile, with active methodologies in all eight courses implanted - Nursing, Pharmacy, Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, Medicine, Nutrition, Dentistry, and Occupational Therapy. The training space of health professionals should provide discussions on the integral health of all, without distinction, whatever their gender may be. In this perspective, it was realized that the GTTrans could contribute with the lack of political projects that do not contemplate this discussion and thus approach students and teachers of the subject, so that, they can become multipliers of the health needs of this population.

The 1st Fórum de Saúde Integral Trans, in the city of Lagarto (Transgender Integral Health Forum), promoted by the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, at the end of 2015, was the beginning of the discussions regarding the subject in that campus. The two days of the event were attended by researchers, activists and health professionals who explained about the specific needs and therapeutic strategies applied to transgender people. In the following year, research and extension projects focused on the health of this population and allowed discussions in permanent spaces during the academic year. This could deepen concepts and terms about the subject.

Thus, GTTrans was proposed as part of the project “Transexualidade e voz: estratégias para saúde vocal” (Transsexuality and voice: strategies for vocal health), linked to the creation of a Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences clinic for transgender people at the University-Clinic of UFS, at the Lagarto Campus. With the inclusion of students of medicine and nursing courses in the project, the need to expand the discussion and deepen the theme arose, which interferes with their clinical practices, improving them as citizens, but mainly as professionals. Thus, by broadening the multidisciplinary approach in health care to the transgender people, the project was characterized as a strategy to implement the proposals to discuss gender, to recognize the already established rights of transgender people in health services and to problematize the work of health professionals. Furthermore, to put Health in the face of transsexuality, in addition to opening the university to these people by inviting them to build and participate in projects.

The meetings had themes that were related to the scientific discussions published in the last years, according to bibliographical research carried out by the participants in the planning period. Although pre-established, the themes were flexibilized according to the needs of the social movements with which the project maintained contact, the regional and national political context and the suggestions of the participants.

Between February and March, the GTTrans was registered in the Sistema Integrado de Gerenciamento e Administração Acadêmica - Integrated System of Management and Academic Administration - SIGAA, a portal that brings together all UFS activities; and thus began the process

of disclosure and registration period for participation. Initially, we offered 30 vacancies, which were exhausted, leading us to increase the number of enrollees. At the end, 66 students enrolled. They were undergraduate students of the courses of the mentioned campus and students coming from other campuses of the university. We also had inscriptions from private universities in Bahia and Sergipe, as well as representatives of social movements from various locations.

In the month of March, the discussion regarded Gender and Gender Identity. A representative of AmoSerTrans - Associação e Movimento Sergipano de Transexuais e Travestis - and one from ASTRAL - Associação de Travestis de Lagarto - participated. To start the discussion, we used the documentary “De gravata e unha vermelha”<sup>5</sup>, available for lease on a digital platform. The documentary brings testimonies of several Brazilian personalities that transit between genders. It questions the act of being a man or a woman. A study<sup>6</sup> indicates this as a descriptive and transformative potential of concepts used in the most recent studies in the field of gender and sexuality. It is strengthened by the real examples, brought by public persons, such as the cartoonist Laerte, the singers Mel Gonçalves and Ney Matogrosso, who showed the various possibilities that exist for the identification of the individual as a social being. The presence of two representatives of social movements can arouse a productive curiosity in the participants: several questions about the way they approach the gender issues and the discrimination appeared, enriching the debate.

The second meeting took place in April and had the participation of a representative of the AmoSerTrans movement. In this meeting, one can understand how the term transvestite was being incorporated into the GLS (gays, lesbians and sympathizers) movement - which came to be called LGBT. It was presented the history of the Transgender movement in Sergipe and its importance in the national scenario. The Unidas - Associação das Travestis na Luta pela Cidadania (Transvestite Association in the Struggle for Citizenship) - was the first organization in Sergipe and the fifth in national territory<sup>7</sup>. The state of Sergipe has a history of struggles for rights and visibility that has boosted the achievements already achieved. The politicization of transvestites and transsexuals in the state encouraged participation in politics, for example, Linda Brasil, a candidate for the elections in the city of Aracaju in the last municipal elections.

The health needs were also explained in this meeting. It was realized that the possibility of a Transgender ambulatory in the state has a positive effect on the hopes of transgender people of having their bodies according to their gender identity. It was also pointed out the urgent need for every health service to put into practice the National LGBT Health Policy, which, among other behaviors, guarantees the use of the social name for transgender people.

In the third meeting, there was no participation of any representative of movements for logistical reasons. The topic covered was “The process of reception of transgender people in health services”, and the discussion triggered by GTTrans participants showed how the participants were attentive to the gender debate and its impact on health services. The difficulties that the health professionals have in carrying out the care directed to the transgender people were discussed. This can be justified

by the absence of contact with this population, for religious reasons or socio-cultural formation, which hinders the service based on the principles of universality and equity of the Brazilian Public Health System (SUS)<sup>8</sup>. In this case, it was reflected on how a prepared professional can contribute positively in the scenarios of practice and work.

In June, the discussion regarded transgender people education. With the presence of ASTRAL and AmoSerTrans militants, it became clear how transgender children are discriminated in school, being prevented from that environment, because of generalized prejudice. It becomes an oppressive and hostile environment to those who do not present socially imposed standards. This heteronormatization of the school environment can be presented as exclusive and discriminatory for those who are not conformed with the social convention of being sexually involved with the opposite sex. When added to the denial view of the genre, to which their genitals were related at birth, a cruel mechanism of suffering, that prevents the adherence to transgender identities emerge<sup>9</sup>. The educational issue was treated as a social determinant of health, while at the same time, globally involved the issues of transsexuality.

“SUS in practice: living in the Health Services” was the theme of the July meeting. In addition to the militant and researcher from Sergipe, Adriana Lohanna, the videoconference was attended by the researcher Adelyany Batista and Sérgio Araújo, one of the founders of the transgender ambulatory in Paraíba. All of the participants were able to explain the difficulties that transgender people have in trying to access health services, and the difficulties in getting care in specialized outpatient clinics. For example, the ambulatory of Paraíba, which emerged from the demand of social movements and until today struggles for regulation with the Ministry of Health, made aware of the bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the integral care of these people.

At the time of the construction of this report, another meeting is scheduled in the future. This meeting will deal with the violence and prejudice that transgender people suffer in various social aspects. We expect the participation of transgender women and men in this meeting, which will be the last before the finalization of the project, given by the II Fórum de Saúde Integral da Pessoa Trans (II Trans Person Integral Health Forum). It will take place at the end of October, with the theme: “The emergence of social changes and adequacy of health services”, the group will try to understand how the struggles of social movements have a positive effect on social interaction, rights and health care.

## Conclusion

The discussions in GTTrans reflect and understand transsexuality as a health condition, in need of specific and specialized services and behaviors, but that does not stigmatize the transgender person as a person with mental disorder.

It is expected for the participants, future health professionals, to understand transgender people in their entirety, helping to ensure that the services they are involved in do not increase the discrimination that is so present and naturalized in society.

The university, as a trainer of these professionals, can make health services better, since the egress ones will become constructors of knowledge and good practices in that environment. Thus, the importance and necessity of including transgender policies in education is emphasized.

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