

Trans and Gender Diverse People's Understanding of and Reception to Information on Menopause and Related Hormonal Fluctuations

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Background:

Calls have been made to increase consideration of the broad diversity of experiences of menopause. This project explored the perspectives and experiences of trans and gender diverse people (hereafter trans) who will or have experienced perimenopause, menopause and/or acute hormonal fluctuations associated with oestrogen cessation and/or ovulation cessation.

Methods:

Three focus groups were held with 17 participants in October 2024. Participants were asked to reflect on their current understanding of menopause, where this understanding was derived, how such understandings aligned to their own experiences, and what were their preferences in seeking menopause-related information and support.

Results:

Participants broadly took issue with the distinction between 'natural' (and attributed to midlife only) and biomedically induced menopause, given the diversity of their own lived experience of menopause. Trans people may not necessarily seek out information about menopause, given predominant social scripting that normalised cisgender women's experiences. Nonetheless, there was clear evidence of the importance of having accurate and accessible information that reflect their experiences and expectations. Trans people sought information by which to i. diagnose themselves as being peri/menopausal and thus understand what was happening to them, ii. to know what therapeutic interventions were available if needed, and/or iii. to be able to manage their own health in ways that reflected their gender identity.

Conclusion:

Recommendations were made to reorient the language around menopause as a fluctuation in hormones that people may experience for a variety of reasons to reflect the variability of experiences that can be understood as menopause. There was an identified need for accurate and accessible information that reflect trans and gender diverse people's experiences and expectations. Inclusivity should be embedded throughout all information regarding menopause to ensure that trans and gender diverse people can read themselves in health-related content and health promotion campaigns.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

This project received partial funding from Women NSW. No pharmaceutical grants were received for this study.