

## Chapter 6

# Issues and Challenges of Transgender Men Menstruators: Gender Dysphoria and the Lived Menstrual Experiences of Transgender Men

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Menstruation has long been considered a vital part of a woman's health. The fact that transgender males menstruate is only recently being acknowledged by academics and medical professionals; therefore, little is known about their viewpoints and menstrual experiences. For this demographic, dealing with menstruation is one area where coping skills are necessary, enabling some degree of independence. This chapter contends that in order to address menstrual shame, taboos, and stigmas in a gender-inclusive manner, degendering menstruation is necessary. The focus of the chapter is on the menstruating experiences of transgender men. An in-depth interview with four trans men menstruators is included in this chapter. For content analysis, the data were evaluated after collection. The chapter would be helpful for future research on empowering and promoting the health of menstruating transgender men.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5568-5.ch006

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of nature as an ontological actuality is directly related to the menstrual process. Menarche is frequently acknowledged as the turning point between being a girl and becoming a woman. People who come from sexually or gender diverse groups and who may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer are referred to by the acronym “LGBTQ.” Although these cultures are very diverse, there are many different “terms and vocabulary used to characterize biological sex, gender, sexuality, and sexual activity” (Fileborn, 2012). In the Indian setting, gender identity and sexual orientation are linked and not often seen as separate notions. Local non-heterosexual identities have been shaped by gender, geography, class, language, and religion (Mohan & Murthy, 2013). India repealed section 377 of its penal code, which made same-sex relationships illegal, on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018. According to data from India’s World Value Survey, many individuals have unfavorable views towards homosexuality. A 2012 editorial on homosexuality and India was published in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry. It acknowledged the richness and diversity of human sexuality and proposed a change in perspective on homosexuality as a typical variant of human sexuality. More recently, on March 10, 2018, the Indian Psychiatric Society and the Bombay Psychiatric Society organized the first conference in Mumbai to discuss the mental health issues that the LGBT community faces. During this conference, the president of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Dr. Ajit Bhide, spoke about the LGBT community’s issues with sexual identity. The purpose of this conference was to “benefit the LGBT community by better preparing ourselves to assist them (Rozatkar & Gupta, 2018).

With a focus on gender theory and the medicalization of trans individuals, transgender tales have become more common in sociological literature during the past ten years. The issues and challenges faced by transgender people who do not identify as women but nevertheless bleed on a monthly basis are covered in this chapter, in addition to biological women who identify as women. They are not given enough attention or care. Rarely are transgender people’s periods studied as menstruators. Because they depend on others and have limited or no access to information about their own bodies, periods, and menstrual products, they commonly face challenges. Since they are afraid to be seen in public, in front of their families, at work, or at school or college, the majority of these people keep to themselves.

Since the term “premenstrual” was first used publicly in 1931, mood-based symptoms have been prominently referenced in diagnostic criteria (Laws, Hey, and Eagan 1985). Contradictory, irrational, and usually hotly debated results have come to characterise PMS analysis so far (Walker, 1997; Knaapen and Weisz, 2008; Halbreich, 2007). This may be somewhat accounted for by the fact that it has frequently engaged in circular thinking or confirmation bias throughout its history.

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