



## **Case study: Care plan for a patient undergoing sex reassignment surgery**

### **Estudo de caso: Plano de cuidados para paciente submetido a cirurgia de redesignação sexual**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Gender identity is not innately defined but results from the biopsychosocial and sexual development of each individual (Olivera et al., 2019). Gender dysphoria manifests as an inconsistency, with associated suffering, between gender identity and the gender assigned at birth (Henriques, 2021). It is often associated with situations such as family rejection, social isolation (Saleiro et al., 2022) and employment discrimination (Bender-Baird, 2011).

In the context of transsexuality, surgical intervention is considered the most appropriate response (Rodrigues, Carneiro & Nogueira, 2021). Sex reassignment surgeries aim to recreate the organs of the opposite sex in terms of function and appearance. However, it is important to emphasize that no surgical technique has proven to be free of complications and functional limitations, making the process complex from a psychological point of view, especially considering the high expectations of users (Dias, 2013).

Within the scope of Primary Health Care, the Family Nurse plays a prominent role as manager of the health care provided to users and families (Decree-Law no. 118/2014). When approaching a patient undergoing sex reassignment surgery, they must ensure quality care, emotional support and combat discrimination.

## **2 OBJECTIVE**

To develop a nursing care plan for a patient undergoing phalloplasty (sex reassignment surgery), to evaluate the physical sequelae and psychological impacts, such as self-concept, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation, in the postoperative period of



the patient and to analyze the experiences of discrimination reported by the patient during the sex reassignment process.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This is a case study whose data collection was carried out in October 2022, based on the semi-structured interview and the application of the Clinical Self-Concept Inventory (ICAC), the Zung Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (EADS-21) and the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (QIS). In order to carry out a critical reflection on the practice of nursing care in the process of social reassignment, a literature review was carried out, using publications, books and search engines B-On (Online Knowledge Library), RCAAP (Open Access Scientific Repository of Portugal), SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), respecting the chronological period from 2010 to 2023.

### **4 DEVELOPMENT**

The surgical procedure resulted in sequelae in the patient, namely recurrent infections at the site of the perineal surgical procedure, which led to multiple hospitalizations and surgical re-interventions, in line with the results of previous studies reporting high complication rates in sex reassignment surgeries (Grift et al., 2016). These complications contributed to a very poor self-concept (ICAC - 60 points), depressive symptoms (EADS-21: depression 20 out of 21 possible points; anxiety 7 out of 21 possible points; stress 10 out of 21 possible points) and worrying suicidal cognitions (SQI 97 out of 180 possible points).

In addition, the client faced discrimination from some health professionals during the transition process, reflecting the difficulties faced by transgender individuals in health services.

Based on the results obtained, the intervention of the Family Nurse was fundamental in the care and monitoring of the patient. The care approach focused on positive thinking training, emotional, psychosocial and educational support to the patient and family, and referral to other elements of the multidisciplinary team. In addition, it provided information on self-care, risk management and resources available in the community, with the aim of empowering the client and family to face the challenges associated with sex reassignment surgery.

### **5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**



The results of this study highlight the importance of holistic and comprehensive care in the follow-up of users undergoing sex reassignment surgery, considering not only the physical complications, but also the psychological, emotional and social impacts of these procedures.

The need to promote awareness and education on gender identity issues among health professionals is highlighted in order to ensure inclusive, discrimination-free and quality care for all transgender users.



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