
Fact sheet 4



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

Clinical practice (*Recommendations 5 and 6*)

Variations in sex characteristics can be complex and require the expertise of a range of clinical specialities.

Comprehensive multidisciplinary care is, therefore, the widely accepted cornerstone of best clinical management. The Commission recommends that all people born with variations in sex characteristics should have access to comprehensive, appropriately qualified multidisciplinary care, available across their lifespan and regardless of where they live.

Comprehensive multidisciplinary care must include mental health professionals, with expertise in the psychological dimensions of variations in sex characteristics. These dimensions include notions of typical and atypical bodies; family, social and cultural considerations; and concerns about social acceptance and bullying.

Multidisciplinary teams should also, where possible, include people with lived experience of variations in sex characteristics to provide important insights into the lifetime experiences of living with a variation.

At present, clinical care occurs within a framework of non-binding international and jurisdiction specific guidelines. These guidelines should be augmented by new National Guidelines.

The Commission recommends that the National Guidelines be developed by a national multidisciplinary expert group convened by the Australian Government and complement legislative reforms.

National Guidelines are intended to complement legislative and regulatory reforms to ensure adherence to those legal requirements. Such legislative and regulatory reforms include a prohibition of medical interventions for people born with variations in sex characteristics without authorisation from independent oversight mechanisms (see Fact sheet 5: Independent Panels).

The National Guidelines should promote the best standards of clinical care and include clinical guidelines and best practice and treatment protocols, including in relation to the provision of psychological and peer support.

The National Guidelines would also include guidance on:

- obtaining informed consent and ensuring affected children and younger people are involved in decisions (see Fact sheet 2: Consent)
- the application of human rights principles in determining whether a medical intervention is a medical necessity (see Fact sheet 3: Medical necessity) and
- requirements for independent authorisation of certain medical interventions (see Fact sheet 5: Independent Panels).

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