Canada Health Infoway's Sex-Gender Working Group

ARGENTINA'S LEXICON ON GENDER IDENTITY

[GI]

AMBIGUITY, ARBITRARINESS & INJUSTICE

Date_ 26/04/2022

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A.

In Argentina, the Ministry of Health recommends the use of the SNOMED CT standard and is already implementing it within the framework of medical records.

SNOMED has cissexist and cisnormative assumptions (including those of pathologization), which influence the experiences and health outcomes of trans people. These assumptions are based on an incorrect understanding of the concepts of gender and sex, which are taken - to begin with - as equivalent, interchangeable, permanent, and codifiable in the narrow terms of a categorical binary.

B.

C.

Recommendations for removing, changing and adding trans specific terms to update SNOMED Argentina

79 specific recommendations on concepts to be deleted, modified or added

4 general recommendations

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

01	Confidentia-lity of transness	02	Clinical irrelevance of gender identity
03	Medical uselessness of "feminine" and "masculine"	04	Open texture of “mother”, “father”, etc…

03

Medical uselessness of the expressions "feminine" and "masculine"

These expressions are part of an enormous number of terms in the SNOMED standard and are problematic. First, because the categories are nonspecific. For example, an injury to the so-called "male genitalia" can refer to an injury to the penis, testicles, prostate, seminal vesicle, scrotum, epididymis, vas deferens, etc. Second, physical characteristics are in themselves neither feminine nor masculine. The dichotomy "female/male" to account for tissues, glands and organs assumes and reinforces inadequate assumptions regarding the binary of sexual difference and the biological determinism of gender. We advise avoiding these undesirable commitments, as well as the vagueness of language, by using precise references. This calls for a more thorough review of the standard, looking for all terms that include the expressions "feminine" and "masculine“.

04

Open texture of the expressions "mother", "father", "maternal" and "paternal".

The challenges of this phenomenon are publicly known. In fact, "mother" is the term used by the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy to explain the notion of "open texture". Today, by virtue of cultural and technological changes, "it is possible to distinguish between the mother who produces the egg, the mother who carries the fetus to term, and the mother who raises the baby. It is not worth asking who the real mother is, simply because the term is not adequate to suggest a solution in the presence of these new circumstances" (Blackburn, 2005:261). In addition, it is now possible for fathers to be the ones who produce the egg, carry the fetus to term and/or take care of the child-rearing tasks, and for mothers to be sperm producers or sperm donors. For this reason, all expressions referring to maternity and paternity should be reviewed.

SEMANTIC SLIPPAGGE & AMBIGUITY

What are we talking about when we talk about “gender identity”?

Manifest concept: GI is defined by law in the terms of the Yogyakarta Principles, i.e., as a subjective experience

Operative concept: in the institutional fabric, uses and social habits, GI is an objective reality

The problem with “the additive approach”

= parallel ontological record. In other words, there are women, there are men, and, in a 3rd column, there are trans people (inhabiting the space of exceptions)

THE LOGIC OF EXCEPTIONALITY

Glossaries:

- Fetishize people
- Exotize people
- Validate obsolete and pathologizing medical jargon
- **Include distorting and incoherent categories**

Data production tools:

- **Use categories that are non exhaustive**
- **Use categories that are they mutually exclusive**
- **Rely on different and incompatible criteria**

DISTURBING FORMS

Sex:

- ❑ Female
- ❑ Male
- ❑ Trans

What does “sex” mean here?

1. Sexual characteristics?
2. Self perceived Gender identity?
3. Identity card information?
4. Transitional status?

Some of us can check any or all of the options in this multiple-choice question without lying

ABSURD ONTOLOGIES: NATIONAL CENSUS 2022

Definition of gender identity: "the internal and individual experience of gender as each person feels it, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, including the personal experience of the body. This may involve modification of bodily appearance or function through pharmacological, surgical or other means, as long as it is freely chosen. It also includes other expressions of gender, such as dress, speech, and manners".

Manifest concept = gender identity as a subjective experience

Argentinian National Census 2022

2 What is [name]'s sex? Refers to sex assigned sex at birth.

- Woman ☐ 1
- Man ☐ 2

3 And according to gender identity, does [name] consider to be...

- Woman ☐ 1
- Trans woman / travesti ☐ 2
- Man ☐ 3
- Trans man ☐ 4
- Other ☐ 5
- Ignored ☐ 9

But…

ABSURD ONTOLOGIES: NATIONAL CENSUS 2022

woman: person who, **according to her assigned sex at birth**, was **registered as a woman** and currently feels and/or perceives herself as a woman.

man: person who, **according to his assigned sex at birth**, was **registered as a man** and currently feels and/or perceives himself as a man.

trans woman/travesti: person who, according to her assigned sex at birth, was registered as a man and currently feels and/or perceives herself as a trans woman or travesti (regardless of whether or not she have had her ID card changed and/or any intervention on her body).

trans man: person who, according to his assigned sex at birth, was registered as a woman and who currently feels and/or perceives himself as a trans man (regardless of whether or not he has had his ID card corrected and/or has undergone any intervention on his body).

other: person who self perceives as having a gender identity different from those mentioned above, for example: intersex, queer, transsexual, transgender, transsexual, etc.

Ignored

ABSURD ONTOLOGIES

Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge. On those remote pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.

Jorge Luis Borges, The Analytical Language of John Wilkins

SNOMED	**YES**, SNOMED has tended to retain cissexist and cisnormative assumptions (like all clinical vocabularies in health information systems). This is explicit in the trans-specific terminology. **BUT** cissexism and cisnormativiy also do their work in the entire conceptual repertoire. E.g.maternal surgical operation, maternal infection, gonorrea in mother complicating childbirth, male genitalia, paternal uniparental disomy of chromosome 5
CONCLUSION	Focusing the review on specific trans concepts is not enough. It is necessary to consider all gendered concepts

THANKS!

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DO YOU HAVE *ANY QUESTIONS?*

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