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S Monro, A Suess Schwend, A Aegerter, A Keating, Y Mestre, M Gramc

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Title

Introducing intersex wellbeing and rights and the INIA programme

Presenter

Surya Monro S.Monro@hud.ac.uk

Author / co-authors

S Monro, 1

A Suess Schwend, 2

A Aegerter, 3

A Keating, 4

Y Mestre, 2

M Gramc, 5

Affiliations

1 - School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, United Kingdom

2 - Andalusian School of Public Health, University of Granada, Granada, Spain

3 - Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

4 - Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

5 - University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

Background: Intersex people are exposed to human rights violations all over the world. Ongoing practices of sex-normalising surgery and other medical interventions on minors too young to give informed consent encroach on their bodily autonomy. Little is known about the public health implications of bodies with variations of sex characteristics (VSC). What key issues do VSCs raise?

Methods: In 2020 the INIA international consortium began work on a large research programme to address intersex people's wellbeing and human rights from a variety of new and innovative perspectives. The programme will train a cohort of 10 early-stage researchers working collaboratively to develop knowledge that will inform policy making and practice across a range of key sectors. Drawing on critical intersex studies, the research projects are relevant to stakeholders who are concerned with supporting the wellbeing and rights of intersex people through knowledge sharing and development. The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 859869. Please see <https://www.intersexnew.co.uk/>.

Results: Indicative findings show that VSC could be an important area of public health work concerning diversity and equality. Early-stage results show a dearth of intersex visibility in key areas including social policy, education, and elder care. Intersex people and those with VSC face major health challenges and discrimination. There is a pressing need for appropriate healthcare.

Conclusions: The interdisciplinary INIA programme surfaces multiple discourses about intersex people and those with variations of sex characteristics. Projects of particular interest to public health practitioners and policy makers include those concerning multi-disciplinary healthcare, ethics, social policy, education, aging, and service user participation.