

INTRODUCTION TO INTERSEX

GENERAL.

- ▽ Note: Intersex is a topic that should have an entire field dedicated to the subject so there is no way we are going to cover it all. We highly encourage you to learn more on the subject. We have chosen to have a specific section on being intersex because it is an experience or identity that is often glossed over and marginalized even in the gender diverse community and it can be but also does not have to be a gender identity. People who are intersex can identify as cisgendered, transgender, or neither.
- ▽ Definition One: "Intersex: This term refers to people who are seen as having bodies (anatomical, reproductive, physiological, genetic, etc.) that do not fit into binary female or male expectations, apparent at birth and/or in later development. It also can include a degree of unwanted and/or unconsented to medical attention or intervention, especially within childhood, that may or may not have been kept secret from the individual. Intersex can be an identity and/or refer to a set of experiences, and can also refer to political mobilization. People who identify as intersex can also identify as cisgender or transgender, or neither. And the term can sometimes be used to refer to the experience, bodies, existence, condition, or diagnosis in addition to an identity." (van Anders, Galupo, Irwin, Twist, Reynolds, Easterbrook, & Hoskin, 2019)
- ▽ Definition Two: "Sex is complex. Even if understood in purely material, biological terms. Humans are simultaneously more similar in our material sex development, AND more diverse, than is widely appreciated. Females and males are not made of wildly different ingredients; the potential to be intersex exists (however briefly) in all humans' prenatal development in the first few weeks... Intersex is an umbrella term for people who are born with atypical sex characteristics (OII Australia, 2012b); these sex characteristics potentially include: our chromosomes, genes, external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, hormones, or secondary characteristics (like body hair). People with intersex variations occur naturally in the human species." (Jones, Hart, Carpenter, Ansara, Leonard, & Lucke, 2016)
- ▽ Note: *We wanted to provide two definitions to highlight the complexity of terminology about gender.*
- ▽ Most people who are born with genitals deemed by their doctors to be non-normative receive what is misleadingly called "corrective" surgery. Parents are often advised without enough information to make an informed choice and that is on top of a gender binary society full of messages about being a "girl" or "boy." In almost every hospital doctors are given two options to assign infants at birth. Either female or male. This has led to the phrase "sex assigned at birth." There are a few places and

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organizations combating this practice and we have a long way to go until we recognize the complexity of human bodies and experiences.

- ▽ 1-2 per every 1000 live births receive what is **misleadingly** called “corrective” surgery.
- ▽ “Given that many elements of sex are difficult to detect, these may be conservative estimates, and it is important to emphasise that many people who are intersex will never know.”
- ▽ Many people never know that they receive this surgery or find out accidentally. This is as common as being a redhead. Further it is estimated 2 in every 100 births have internal and/or unobserved markers of being intersex. (the previous three items are from: Jones, Hart, Carpenter, Ansara, Leonard, & Lucke, 2016)
- ▽ Psychology and our history of harm - Psychologist John Money and team at John Hopkins wrote a lifetime worth of articles about “corrective genital surgery” on infants. Before his work, surgeries were primarily done on adults who wanted the surgery and could consent. (Intersex Society of North America, <https://isna.org/faq/concealment/>)
- ▽ 2018 Resolution #SCR110 CA passes legislation protecting Intersex infants from non consensual surgery. This was the **first** legislature of its kind the U.S.
- ▽ Key Points “Key Points” from Jones, Hart, Carpenter, Ansara, Leonard, & Lucke’s Book Intersex: Stories and Statistics from Australia.
 - “Human sex is more complex than is widely assumed, and intersex variations are to be expected within the human race as a natural expression of this complexity.
 - People with intersex variations have long faced issues of visibility and stigma, although this is beginning to be challenged.
 - There has been a lack of affirming sociological research; existing studies on people with intersex variations were mainly conducted in medical frames in the past.
 - There are many theoretical frames used in the field, most of these frames erase what are anecdotally people with intersex variations most urgent concerns.
 - There is a strong need for a distinct ‘Intersex Studies’ field devoted entirely to intersex issues; considering the perspectives and experiences of people with intersex variations themselves.”

INTRODUCTION TO INTERSEX (continued)

ARTICLES.

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BOOKS.

Dreger, A. D. (Ed.) (1999). *Intersex in the age of ethics*. Hagerstown, Md: University Pub. Group.

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