Impact of the pandemic on the gender transition process in Portugal: the experience of transsexual individuals

Transsexual individual
is “an individual who goes through a social transition (male to female or female to male) and may also involve a somatic transition through hormonal treatment and genital surgery (sex reassignment surgery)” (APA, 2013 (DSM-V)).

Gender transition process
is a complex process that involves several phases from psychological assessment and follow-up to surgery (if that is the individual’s desire) (Bizic et al., 2018; Bracanovic, 2017). There are six steps to this process:
→ Diagnosis
→ Social transition
→ “real life” experience
→ Hormonal treatment
→ Sexual reassignment surgery
→ Name change

Importance and relevance of this study
With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the problems that these individuals face became more visible. The levels of discrimination are higher, the mental health of these individuals is worse, and the differences felt in terms of opportunities are increasingly marked (Doring, 2020; Branstrom & Pachankis, 2020; van der Miesen, Raaijmakers, & van de Grift, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Fish et al., 2020; Gonzales, Loret de Mola, Gavulic, McKay, & Purcell, 2020).

Research question - What are the experiences of transsexuals in Portugal on the impact of the pandemic on them and on the gender transition process in Portugal?

Methodology
Type of study - qualitative study
How will the information be collected? Through semi-structured interviews that will be done to transsexual individuals who are currently in the process of gender transition
How will the information be analyzed? Through the Nvivo software, and through thematic analysis.

Implications
This study will allow to further assess the process of gender transition in Portugal during the pandemic, through the experiences shared by people who are currently undergoing this process.

Assess the impact of the pandemic
• in the gender transition process.
• in the individuals who intend to undergo a gender transition process.

Some of the topics for the interview
→ When did you start identifying as a transsexual?
→ When did your gender transition process started?
→ What stage of the gender transition process are you currently in?
→ What stage of the gender transition process were you in the beginning of the pandemic?
→ How do you feel that the pandemic has impacted your gender transition process?
→ What support, if any, have you been having during this pandemic from your family and friends?
→ What has been the main challenge you have experienced as a transgender individual during the pandemic?

References
American Psychiatric Association (2013). Gender dysphoria. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th edition)