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Brief Report

Transsexualism and Anatomic Sex Ratio Reversal in Poland

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Transsexualism has been described in numerous papers as a condition appearing, on the average, four times as often with somatic males than with somatic females. Against this background we consider the situation in Poland, where, during three consecutive observation cycles over 6 years, the results obtained were reversed. Among our transsexuals the ratio was 5.5:1, with the majority being somatic females.

KEY WORDS: transsexualism; female-to-male ratio.

The somatic male vs. female ratio among transsexuals in the United States and in West European countries varies, according to different authors. Still, a constant rule is that somatic males prevail and the general mean somatic male: female ratio is about 4:1 (Pauly, 1968; 1974). The preponderance of somatic males occurs among typically diagnosed U. S. transsexuals (Lothstein, 1983; Meyer *et al.*, 1986) and somatic males were also in majority among patients examined by Belkin and Trejper (1972) in the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is noteworthy that in Poland the situation is reversed.

An analysis dealing with diagnoses of 1000 patients examined in Cracow over a period from April 1974 to March 1978 revealed 716 persons requiring sexologic treatment. Of this number, 85% were men and 17% were women. The age of males ranged between 14-80 years (modal age between 21-25 years) and of females between 15-60 years (modal age between 21-25 years). Among male patients there were 6% homosexuals and 0.3% ($n = 2$) transsexuals meeting the diagnostic criteria of DSM III (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Among female patients there were 4% homosexuals and 7% ($n = 8$) transsexuals (Godlewski *et al.*, 1980).

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We observed a considerable predominance of females, and in absolute figures the ratio is reversed in relation to that usually presented in the literature. We found four female-to-male transsexuals vs. one male-to-female transsexual in our initial group. After the above observations were made, during the following 8 months, we observed three more female-to-male patients but no male-to-female patients (Godlewski *et al.*, 1980). Over a period of 2 years after completing the above observations, an additional 2 male-to-female and 14 female-to-male transsexuals (Godlewski and Jablonski, 1983) were observed. The mean ratio from the two observation periods is 5.5:1 with the majority being female-to-male transsexuals.

The etiology of transsexualism is unknown and is the subject of various speculations. It is difficult to understand why, in Poland, these factors should increase the number of female-to-male transsexuals, and in other countries, on the contrary, the male-to-female. A genetic explanation would be inappropriate, because the patients observed came from different parts of Poland and not from an enclave. It seems that the results of the above observations deserve attention even if based on a small number of patients, because they are repetitive in consecutive, separate observations over a period of 6 years.

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