

The Royal Society of Medicine

Snapshots in LGBTQ+ Medical History



1910

Magnus Hirschfeld's study *Die Transvestiten* classifies the practice of cross-dressing and is the first to coin the term 'transvestitism'

Hirschfeld went on to found the **Institute for Sexual Science** in Berlin in 1919 becoming an internationally important centre for the study of all aspects of sexuality, until it was destroyed by the Nazis in 1933. He also established the world's first gender identity clinic. He lived as an openly gay man and was the driving force for homosexual emancipation in Germany between 1897 and 1933.

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1932

The first documented gender reassignment surgery on **Dora Richter** is undertaken by **Dr Levy-Lenz** and **Dr Gohrbandt**

Dora was born **Rudolph Richter** and worked with other transsexuals as a domestic servant at Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science, one of the few places allowing transvestites to be employed. She becomes the first transgender woman to have undergone a vaginoplasty. An account about Dora's story is later written up by Magnus Hirschfeld, who also oversaw the surgery, in his work on gender studies *Geschlechtskunde*.

Later, in 1945, **Sir Harold Gillies** and **Ralph Millard** perform a phalloplasty on **Dr Michael Dillon** in the UK. This pioneering pedicle flap surgery was developed by Gillies as reconstructive surgery for injured WWII soldiers and is offered as a genital surgery option for transgender men.



Media Credit: Hirschfeld M. *Geschlechtskunde*; auf grund dreissigjähriger forschung und erfahrung bearbeitet. Stuttgart: J. Püttmann, v.4, 1930, p.552

1952

Christine Jorgensen is the first male-to-female transsexual whose gender reassignment surgery was widely publicised by the media, creating a worldwide sensation

U.S. Army veteran, **George Jorgensen** returned from a trip to Denmark transformed into Christine. She is the first to speak openly about her experience with hormone replacement therapy and gender confirmation surgery. Her transition was front page news in American newspapers making her an instant celebrity and she uses this platform to advocate for transgender people.

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1966

German-born American endocrinologist and sexologist, **Harry Benjamin** publishes *The Transsexual Phenomenon*

The term 'transsexual' was first coined by Benjamin in 1957 and he's considered to be the 'father of transsexualism'. In *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, he distinguishes between transvestitism and transsexuality and advocates acceptance of 'sex change' surgery. His treatment approach to transsexuality eventually gained precedence over psychoanalysis.

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1973

The American Psychiatric Association votes to remove 'homosexuality' from their list of recognised psychiatric disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II)*

American psychologist **Evelyn Hooker**'s influential 1956 paper proved that homosexual men are as psychologically well-adjusted as heterosexual men, which became a major factor in the American Psychiatric Association's decision. Equally influential were **Alfred Kinsey**'s 1948-1953 research studies on the sexual behaviour of human males and females, in which he criticised scientists' tendency to represent homosexuals and heterosexuals as "inherently different types of individuals". It's not until 1992, that 'homosexuality' is finally removed from the list of mental disorders in the **World Health Organization's** *International Classification of Diseases*.

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1981

The first cases of **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)** are recorded

Five previously healthy gay men in Los Angeles present with a rare lung infection, *Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP)*. There are also reports of groups of men in New York and California with a rare aggressive skin cancer, Kaposi's Sarcoma.

Terrence Higgins is the first British gay man diagnosed with AIDS. His partner and friends set up the **Terrence Higgins Trust** after his death in 1982, becoming a leading sexual health and HIV charity in the UK.

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1983

Researchers at Pasteur Institute in Paris isolate the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)** which subsequently becomes recognised as the cause of AIDS by the worldwide scientific community in 1986

Two years later, the first commercial AIDS antibody blood test ELISA is licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In the UK, HIV testing is introduced together with provision of counselling services for patients who test positive and all blood donations are routinely tested at blood transfusion centres.

In 1986, the UK Department of Health funds **SIGMA (Socio-sexual Investigations of Gay Men and AIDS)** to conduct a study offering HIV testing in non-clinical settings until 1995. The group eventually becomes **Sigma Research** which now undertakes research on all issues of LGBT health and wellbeing.

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1988

The **World AIDS Summit** takes place in London

Jointly sponsored by the World Health Organization and the UK Government, the conference is the first time that nations come together to discuss AIDS attracting health ministers from 148 countries, representing 95% of the world's population. The **London Declaration on AIDS Prevention** is announced at this conference, protecting individuals from discrimination and stigmatization in AIDS prevention programmes. The first observance of **World AIDS Day**, initiated by the World Health Organization, takes place on 1 December 1988 dedicated to raising AIDS awareness.

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1993

The UK Department of Health forms one of the first staff LGBT networks, **PRISM**

Two years later, the **Gay and Lesbian Association of Doctors and Dentists (GLADD)** is founded. Highlights of their work include production of the document *Dignity at Work* supported by the British Medical Association, British Dental Association, General Medical Council and General Dental Council, and in 2006, their report on support for healthcare professionals living with HIV.

In 2009, the **British Medical Association (BMA)** publishes a celebration of LGBT doctors' contributions to the NHS to mark 'LGBT History Month' (first celebrated in February 2005).

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1996

Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) is in early development combining antiretroviral drugs including protease inhibitors to suppress HIV replication and minimise drug resistance, which will eventually radically change the prognosis of HIV/AIDS

A year later, HAART can be taken as a single daily tablet, making it easier for people living with HIV to take their medication. Then, in 2002, the first rapid HIV test is approved. It's 99.6% accurate and provides a result in 20 minutes. **Truvada** is approved in 2012 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as the first drug to prevent acquisition of sexually and intravenous HIV transmission, to be taken daily for those at risk.

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2006

The first annual **LGBT Health Summit** discussing health issues of LGBT people in the UK is held in London

In the same year, the first **UK Department of Health working group on trans issues** is chaired by Christine Burns as part of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Advisory Group (SOGIAG) – later succeeded by the LGBT Advisory Group.

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2008

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act provides equal access to legal parentage for lesbians and their partners in relation to IVF or assisted/self insemination

Same-sex couples and all single people regardless of sexual orientation have been able to adopt or foster children in England since 2002, after removal of the condition that only married couples can adopt from the **Adoption and Children Act**. The Act was passed in full in Scotland in 2007. In Northern Ireland, a single gay or lesbian person could adopt children, but a couple in a civil partnership could not until the law was amended in 2013.

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2008

The largest study of trans people's experiences of accessing healthcare services, *Transgender EuroStudy: Legal Survey and Focus on Transgender Experience of Health Care*, is published

In the same year, **Stonewall** publish *Prescription for Change*, a national report about the neglected healthcare needs and experiences of over 6,000 lesbian and bisexual women.

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2011

The U.S. Institute of Medicine (IOM) publishes its landmark report on health disparities among LGBT people and its recommendations to address these disparities

The report *Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding* assesses the state of science on the health status of LGBT populations in all stages of life, identifies research gaps and opportunities, and outlines a research agenda for the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

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2012

Stonewall publishes the largest survey of gay and bisexual men's health needs in the world

With 6,861 respondents from across Britain, the survey finds that many gay and bisexual men's health needs are not being met and that there are areas of significant concern - most particularly in mental health and drug use - that have been overlooked by health services which too often focus solely on gay men's sexual health.

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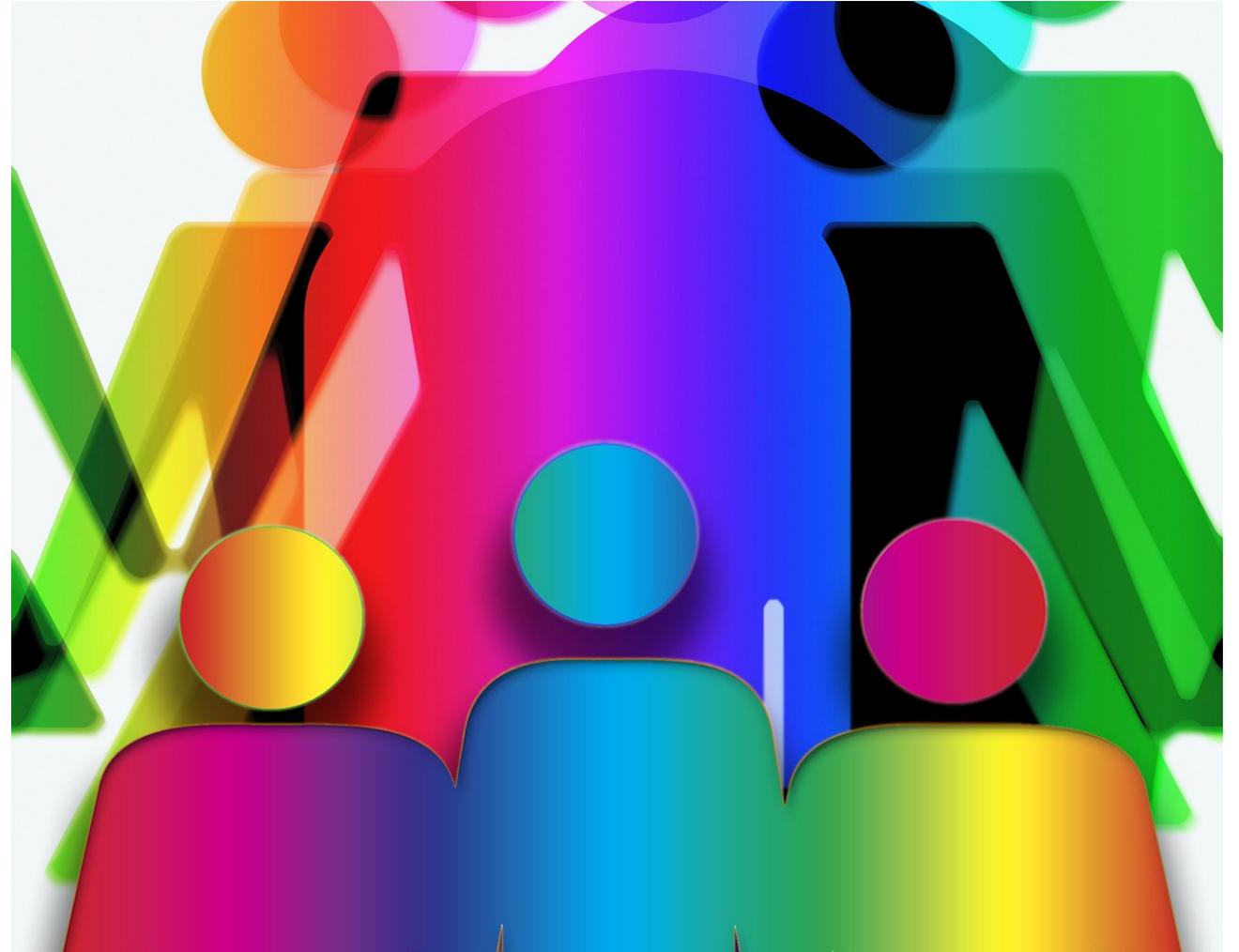
2018

The UK's Government Equalities Office publishes the **National LGBT Survey**

The survey was launched in July 2017 to gain insight in to the experiences of LGBT people in the UK in the areas of safety, health, education and employment. Over 108,000 people participated in the survey making it the largest national survey of LGBT people in the world to date. Also in 2018, **Stonewall** publishes *LGBT in Britain: Health Report* based on a survey of more than 5,000 LGBT people living in the UK, looking at their mental health and well-being and investigating their experiences of discrimination in seeking medical support.

In response to the National LGBT Survey, the Government Equalities Office publishes their landmark **LGBT Action Plan (2018)** setting out the government's commitment to improving the lives of LGBT people.

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2019

The UK Government appoints the first **National Advisor for LGBT Health** in the NHS

Alongside a new expert Advisory Panel, **Dr Michael Brady**, Medical Director of the Terrence Higgins Trust and a sexual health and HIV consultant at King's College Hospital, will advise the government on how to tackle inequality and improve access in the healthcare system including improving healthcare professionals' awareness of LGBT issues and implementation of sexual orientation monitoring across the NHS. The Government Equalities Office's host their inaugural **national LGBT conference** on 18 March 2019.



2019

The International Longevity Centre UK publishes new research findings exploring the discrepancies in health outcomes experienced by older (50+) LGBT people

Conducted by researchers at University College London (UCL), Cardiff University and ILC (funded by the Wellcome Trust), the findings reveal that a lifetime of prejudice and stigma is leading to worse physical and mental health, poorer access to health and social care, as well as greater levels of social isolation and loneliness among older LGBT people. This analysis has, for the first time, demonstrated strongly that these differences persist even after accounting for other factors.

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Acknowledgements

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