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"I Don't Think This is Theoretical; This is Our Lives": How Erasure Impacts Health Care for Transgender People

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For people who are transgender, transsexual, or transitioned (trans), access to primary, emergency, and transition-related health care is often problematic. Results from Phase I of the Trans PULSE Project, a community-based research project in Ontario, Canada, are presented. Based on qualitative data from focus groups with 85 trans community members, a theoretical framework describing how erasure functions to impact experiences interacting with the health care system was developed. Two key sites of erasure were identified: informational erasure and institutional erasure. How these processes work in a mutually reinforcing manner to erase trans individuals and communities and produce a system in which a trans patient or client is seen as an anomaly is shown. Thus, the impetus often falls on trans individuals to attempt to remedy systematic deficiencies. The concept of cisnormativity is introduced to aid in explaining the pervasiveness of trans erasure. Strategies for change are identified. [Abstract]

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