ISRCTN12033866 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN12033866

Exploring the experiences of transgender patients and their healthcare professionals at Milton Keynes University Hospital

Submission date 08/10/2025	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol
Registration date 07/05/2026	**Overall study status** Completed	[_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results
Last Edited 07/05/2026	**Condition category** Other	[_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
In hospitals, Trans* patients often experience stigma from staff, as well as excellent and sensitive care. Some healthcare professionals are comfortable and able to provide sensitive, appropriate care to Trans* patients, but many are uncomfortable with the idea. This study aims to understand the emotions and feelings experienced by staff and Trans* patients whilst they are in hospital.

Who can participate?
Trans* and non-binary patients, including those under the Trans* umbrella: Transgender, Transgender men, Transgender women, non-binary people, and gender non-conforming people, can take part, and they can nominate a healthcare professional who was involved in their care.

What does the study involve?
Each participant will be interviewed alone. Each participant will be interviewed once. They will be shown a pack of photographs from which they will pick images that remind them of their emotions and feelings whilst they were in hospital. They will explain to the interviewer how the chosen photos represent their feelings and emotions. These will be compared with the stories from other participants to find similarities and differences.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
There are no specific benefits to participating. It may be that talking about a situation helps the individual to make sense of it, but this is not the aim of the study. Helping healthcare workers to better understand their own feelings and emotions, and those of their Trans* patients, may help to create more understanding and better healthcare experiences in future.
There is a small risk of distress to participants during the interviews if the event described was distressing. Signposting to support and advice will be given to any participants needing further support.

Where is the study run from?
The Milton Keynes University Hospital, UK.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
April 2021 to April 2026. The interviews will start in November 2025. The last participant will be interviewed in April 2026.

Who is funding the study?
The study is part of a PhD sponsored by the University of Hertfordshire, UK.

Who is the main contact?
Thandiwe Rosemarysdottir, ar21aat@herts.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name
Ms Thandiwe Rosemarysdottir

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2534-8391

Contact details
c/o Research and Development Department
Academic Centre
Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Milton Keynes
United Kingdom
MK6 5LD
+44 (0)7773770513
ar21aat@herts.ac.uk

Additional identifiers

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
327106

Study information

Scientific Title
Exploring the experiences of transgender patients and their healthcare professionals at Milton Keynes University Hospital

Acronym
Empath

Study objectives

To identify discrete healthcare events involving the care of Trans* patients.
To identify the patient and the healthcare professional involved in that event.
To interview dyads consisting of a Trans* patient and their healthcare provider about an identified hospital attendance to identify the feelings and emotions elicited by the event.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 08/05/2025, London - Camden & Kings Cross Research Ethics Committee (2 Redman Place, Stratford, London, E20 1JQ, United Kingdom; +44 (0)207 104 8244; CamdenandKingsCross.REC@hra.nhs.uk), ref: 25/LO/0123

Primary study design
Other

Study design
Appreciative inquiry-based interviews will be carried out by the Principal Investigator. These are to elicit feelings and emotions experienced during that episode of care. The Core Question for the Ai interviews has been co-created with PPI groups. Photo elicitation will be used to generate the participants' narrative. Thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews will be done by the Principal Investigator in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006).

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Transgender patient experience

Interventions
This study will identify discrete healthcare events involving the care of Trans* patients, with inclusion of all those under the Trans* umbrella: Transgender, Transgender men, Transgender women, non-binary people, and gender non-conforming people. It will identify the patient and the healthcare professional involved in that event. Dyads consisting of a Trans* patient and their healthcare provider will be interviewed about the identified hospital attendance to identify the feelings and emotions elicited by the event.

The intervention is a one-off, face-to-face, one-to-one interview using photographs to aid participants in describing emotions and feelings. Each interview will last approximately 90 minutes. There is no follow-up.

Photographs can often help people put emotions and feelings into words, especially if they have less experience of discussing these. The interviews are face-to-face to facilitate the use of physical photographs. Interviews are one-to-one, as emotions and feelings can be hard to discuss in front of others, so privacy is provided. Interviews will take place in a private room within the hospital.

The principal investigator is a nurse with 30 years of experience. She is proficient in one-to-one communication with people of all ages, especially around difficult subjects, with 20 years of experience in sexual health.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
1. Feelings and emotions elicited by a discrete healthcare event involving a Trans* patient and their healthcare provider measured using dyadic interviews focused on an indentified hospital attendance at one time point

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. The mechanisms or processes through which best practice in the care of Trans* patients can be transferred across the hospital, measured using dyadic interviews focused on an identified hospital attendance at one time point

Completion date
22/04/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Has attended MKUH as a patient in the last 18 months
2. Identifies as Trans* (inclusion of all those under the Trans* umbrella: Transgender, Transgender men, Transgender women, non-binary people, and gender non-conforming people)
3. Is a current member of staff at MKUH
4. Has been selected by the Trans* patient to form the case duo

Participant type(s)
Health professional, Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
13 Years

Upper age limit
100 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Is <13 years old
2. Is >16 years old and whose responsible adult does not consent to the young person participating

3. Inability to consent
4. Previous recruitment into the study
5. Patient in custody or prison

Date of first enrolment
01/11/2025

Date of final enrolment
20/04/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Milton Keynes University Hospital
Milton Keynes Hospital
Standing Way
Eaglestone
Milton Keynes
England
MK6 5LD

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Hertfordshire

ROR
https://ror.org/0267vjk41

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study will be available upon request from Thandiwe Rosemarysdottir, ar21aat@herts.ac.uk.

• The type of data that will be shared - All of the individual participant data collected during the trial, after deidentification.
• Timing for availability - Beginning 6 months and ending 36 months following article publication.
• Whether consent from participants was required and obtained - No
• Comments on data anonymization - All data will be deidentified. The study focuses on a small population of a regional DGH, so minimal identifying data will be gathered initially
• Any ethical or legal restrictions - none
• Any additional comments - none

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Other files			07/05/2026	No	No
Participant information sheet	version 1.0	12/11/2024	07/05/2026	No	Yes
Participant information sheet	version 1.2	16/06/2025	07/05/2026	No	Yes
Participant information sheet	version 1.0	12/11/2024	07/05/2026	No	Yes
Participant information sheet	version 1.2	16/06/2025	07/05/2026	No	Yes
Participant information sheet	version 1.2	16/06/2025	07/05/2026	No	Yes
Protocol file	version 1.1	23/03/2025	07/05/2026	No	No