

# Gender-affirming hair removal improves mental health

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(HealthDay)—For transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) adults

assigned male at birth, gender-affirming hair removal (GAHR) is associated with improved mental health, according to a research letter published online July 21 in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Michelle S. Lee, from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues conducted a secondary analysis of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey of 27,715 U.S. TGD adults. The respondents assigned male sex at birth were asked whether they had or wanted any of the [health care](#) listed for gender transition, including hair removal/electrolysis. Respondents who reported undergoing GAHR were included as the exposure group; controls reported a desire for but had not had GAHR. Five binary [mental health](#) outcomes were examined among participants.

Overall, 42.8 percent of respondents reported being assigned male sex at birth. Of these, 41.6 and 47.7 percent had undergone [hair](#) removal and desired, but had not yet received, [hair removal](#), respectively. The researchers found that GAHR correlated with reduced odds of past-month severe psychological distress, past-year smoking, and past-year suicidal intent after adjustment for sociodemographic factors and other gender-affirming care (adjusted odds ratios, 0.62, 0.76, and 0.72, respectively). No significant correlation was seen between GAHR and past-month binge alcohol use or past-year suicide attempts.

"These findings reinforce the only existing empirical investigation, to our knowledge, on this subject—a [small-scale study](#) demonstrating that GAHR is associated with improved mental health and quality of life," the authors write.

One author disclosed future royalties from a forthcoming textbook.

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