



A Kindred Spirit

Organisation Internationale des Intersexués
International Intersex Organization

Why read this? Chances are that you know at least one intersexed (sometimes known by the older term of 'hermaphrodite') individual. Intersexuality is more common than Cystic Fibrosis which impacts 1:2500 births. You may have seen the number 1:2000. This number reflects those born with ambiguous genitals where determination of sex is difficult. Actually intersexuality not only encompasses those in this category with some studies listing as many as 4:100 births with conditions or syndromes classified as intersexed.

Current methods of treatment for those with these conditions are outdated and concealment based thus leading to physical scars, pain and the likely hood of more surgeries in the future with the loss of physical sexual sensation. Emotionally it leads to the shame, guilt, secrecy and isolation it was to prevent. Five neonates today will be subject to unnecessary surgery without their consent. Originally this and other methods of treatment were thought to normalize the individual thereby leading to a normal life. Doctors in the past sought to assign gender mistaken in their assumptions that they knew what gender is best for the child and their definition of male and female were the only options. In fact the majority of affected individuals coming forward today are dissatisfied with the results and have been left to deal with the social difficulties seemingly alone.

We are seeking to move to a more patient centered model for treatment allowing the child to mature raised in a gender based on the best predictive outcome yet allowing for the child's gender to manifest itself and the child deciding when or if surgery is needed. In doing this we must first acknowledge the diversity of humanity. We hope that you will join us.

Those born intersexed for the most part are not born with a condition requiring surgery. The requirement for 'normalization' comes through societal expectations of what is normal. If there is a need for surgery on neonates we recommend that only the surgery required to maintain the health of the child be performed saving any additional surgery until the child can understand the outcome with the potential loss of functionality.

You are likely thinking about now that the sex of a child is easily determined through a chromosome test. Chromosomes are but one part of the makeup of an individual's gender, they do not tell the whole story. In addition to chromosomes we have gonadal sex (testes or ovaries), internal morphologic sex (prostate or uterus), external morphologic sex (genitalia), hormonal sex (androgens or estrogens), phenotypic sex (secondary sexual features like chest hair), assigned sex and gender of rearing, and sexual identity / orientation included by some. We have females with XY chromosome and males with XXY and many other variations including Mosaic individuals with XX and XY. Many today that are intersexed may not even know that

they are, leading perfectly normal lives with an extra chromosome or two. Most intersex individuals identify as male or female themselves however there are those that do not seem to fit either.

Intersex individuals wish only to be a valued part of society with the same benefits as all others in society. We can do this with your help in assisting us to Stop The Harm. Tell five people today about intersexuality, not an expert, not a problem just provide them a copy of this to point them in the right direction.

Like to learn more? Read:

Lessons from the Intersex, *Suzanne Kessler*
Intersex and Identity, *Sharon Preves*

As Nature Made Him, *John Colapinto*

Intersex in the Age of Ethics, *Alice Dreger*

Chrysalis: Intersex Awakening Special Issue
Cheryl Chase

Pediatric Assignment of Sex

Visit the following web sites:

A Kindred Spirit

www.kindredspiritlakeside.homestead.com/

Organisation Internationale des Intersexués

www.intersexualite.org/

Intersex Society of North America

www.isna.org/

Bodies Like Ours

www.bodieslikeours.org/

Intersex Initiative Portland

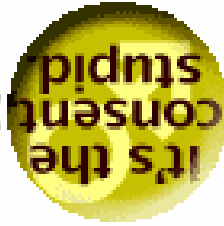
www.ipdx.org/

AIS Support Group UK

www.medhelp.org/www/ais/



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What You Need To Know About Intersexuality

'Give 'em an inch' graphic by Madeleine Blaustein

Help us Stop The Harm!

Help us End the Guilt and Shame!

Support buttons available at:
www.confluere.com/store/button-intersex.html

Dedicated to the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding of the intersexed.
Ending guilt , shame, secrecy and unwarranted surgeries through education.