

Medical services for transgender people needed

A survey released on Monday found that transgender people are in high need of medical services, with 62 percent having a demand for hormone therapies, and 51 percent having a demand for gender reassignment treatment.

Both demands are not fully satisfied, the report said. Only 6 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the current domestic situation for provision of and access to hormone therapy, and just 2 percent thought that there were enough medical resources for sex reassignment surgeries.

The Chinese Transgender Population General Survey Report was compiled by the Beijing LGBT Center and Peking University's Sociology Department, with help from the UN Development Programme and the Dutch embassy.

"The medical resources are now far from adequate," said Kelly Kiseki, the transgender program manager at Beijing LGBT Center.

Transgender people also experience persistent neglect, verbal abuse, physical beatings and other forms of violence from their family and at school, work and public spaces, according to the report.

"The discrimination from work is a reason that a relatively large number of transgender respondents earn a low income," Xin said. The report shows 33.5 percent reported an after-tax annual income of less than 25,000 yuan (\$3,770).

James Yang, the Beijing LGBTI in Asia program officer from UN Development Programme, said people in the transgender community are caught in a vicious cycle.

"The discrimination and low income make it difficult for them to get proper medical treatment, which to some degree causes the high rates of self-harm and suicide," he added.

Almost half of transgender people in China have contemplated suicide, with many going on to attempt to take their own life, according to a survey released on Monday.

The report did not include an estimate of the number of transgender people in China, but a survey of 2,060 people showed 46.2 percent have considered suicide, and 12.7 percent had survived a suicide attempt.

The report also found 44.5 percent have thought about self-mutilation as a result of being transgender and 21.2 percent had exhibited some level of self-mutilating behavior.

Xin Ying, director of the Beijing LGBT Center, an NGO set up in 2008, said the transgender group have long been in an awkward position in the society.

“They are often confronted with serious mental problems,” Xin said.