When a Stranger Called Me Sir
From Haircuts to Hormones, Binders to Clothes:
Gender Euphoria in Transgender Adults
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Introduction
Virginia Prince, a transgender author and organizer, coined the term gender euphoria in opposition to medicine’s emphasis on the negative experience of gender and the later psychiatric diagnosis of gender dysphoria. While gender dysphoria has a clear definition and criteria, what is gender euphoria? From dysphoria to euphoria, this study changes the focus of trans research onto positive experiences.

Specific Aim
We collected data to establish a preliminary definition of gender euphoria. This presentation is a call to action for researchers to focus on positive experiences of trans individuals, such as gender euphoria. By reviewing gender euphoria’s historical context, as well as key findings from the project, this presentation is the starting point for future research on the subject. Furthermore, this will serve as an open call for trans researchers to join the qualitative analysis team (pending IRB approval and protocol).

Material and Methods
Through an extensive interdisciplinary review, prioritizing trans authors, we constructed a preliminary definition of gender euphoria: the positive emotional response to the internal or external affirmation of one’s gender identity and/or expression. This derived definition contains three primary facets: 1) experiencing positive affect; 2) experiencing a sense of belonging from one’s self or others; and 3) having an experience of authenticity. Our definition was then tested in a survey of transgender adults (N =395), of various trans identities and ages ranging from 18 to 70 (M = 27.5, SD = 9.1). Participants were asked to define gender euphoria, read and reflect on our definition, and then respond to the three primary facets of our definition.

Results
Most participants (91.90%) agreed with our definition of gender euphoria. Participants also found our definition to be consistent with their personal definitions, with 90.70% reporting some degree of consistency. The majority of participants endorsed a facet of positive affect, specifically the experience of joy (85.4%) or the experience of general positive emotions (95.8%). Participants also tended to agree on the facet of gender belonging, with 90.7% endorsing self-acceptance, 64.1% endorsing acceptance by others, and 83.9% endorsing general belonging. Lastly, the experience of an authentic self was reported as a key component with 94.9% of participants reporting some level of agreement with the sentiment that feeling gender euphoria was akin to feeling like your true self.

Conclusion
Results support our preliminary definition of gender euphoria. All three facets (positive affect, sense of belonging, authenticity) were endorsed as key components of gender euphoria, with some variance in individual interpretation. Further research will analyze the qualitative data.
collected from participant personal definitions before exposure to the proposed preliminary definition.

By establishing a definition of gender euphoria, future research can investigate the potential protective effects of gender euphoria against negative health outcomes such as gender dysphoria and depression. Using a standard definition will also aid in community education and intervention within the transgender community. Through this project, using the voices of transgender people, we have data-informed definition of gender euphoria and provided a critical start to guide future research.