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# Five Kinds of Gender

## Shedding Some Light on the Rare Condition, Transsexualism

Reprinted with kind permission from [Zoe Brain's web blog](#). Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 2008 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... the research could help clarify ... what creates 'gender identity'

Scientists say they may have found genes that help explain why a tiny percentage of men see themselves as women, cruelly trapped in the wrong body. The researchers say the findings are very preliminary and should be "interpreted with the utmost caution," due to the small sample size used in their study.

*Even a few hours after birth, significant behavioural differences are noted between morphologically 'normal' boys and girls.*

Nonetheless, they say, the results might shed some light on the rare condition, transsexualism. It is estimated to afflict about 1 in 30,000 men, some of whom follow through on their sense of their correct gender by having sex change operations.

More broadly, the research could help clarify one of the most contentious and poorly understood questions in biology: what creates 'gender identity' the sense most people have that they are either a man or a woman.

The feeling is normally rather deep-seated; people don't need to examine their body shapes to confirm it. It is also considered distinct from the issue of whom a person is sexually attracted to.

So what is Gender? (From [Transgendercare.com](#))

From research and observation, I have developed a list of five semi-independent attributes of gender, as a map to help you to understand this complex often hotly emotional issue of gender.

Consider sexual identity/behaviour (gender) springing from five semi-independent attributes:

- **Genetic Gender:** Our chromosomal inheritance;
- **Physical Gender:** Our primary and secondary sexual characteristics;
- **Brain Gender:** Functional structure of the brain, along gender lines;
- **Brain Sex:** Love/sex Patterns, How we relate to others on a social and interpersonal as well as sexual level. Love Maps; and
- **Gender Identity?:** Our subjective gender, our sexual self-map, how we feel ourselves to be: male or female;

**Genetic gender** can be rather mixed. Most people are 46,xy (male) or 46,xx (female): but some are 47,xy (Klinefelter Syndrome Male), some 45,xo (Turner Syndrome Female), and then there's mosaics and chimerae.

**Physical gender** usually follows the pattern laid down by the genes, but mutations such as Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome can turn genetic males into phenotypical females, and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia the reverse.

**Brain gender** is reflected in behavioural differences measurable even in the earliest days of childhood.

[Transgendercare.com](#)

Even a few hours after birth, significant behavioural differences are noted between morphologically 'normal' boys and girls.

New born girls are much more sensitive to touch and sound than their male counterparts. Several day old girls spend about twice as long looking back at an adult face than boys, and even longer if the adult is speaking. A girl can distinguish between the cries of another infant from other extraneous noises long before a boy. Even before they can understand language, girls do better at identifying the emotional context

of speech.

These behavioural differences are because there are significant morphological differences between male and female brain structures.

**Brain Sex** - Chicks dig Romance, Guys dig Big, er, are more concerned with physical appearance.

[Transgencare.com](http://Transgencare.com) 

Female brained individuals cannot and do not separate how they feel about a person (good, bad, nice, boring, etc.) and how they see them sexually. They must feel positive about a person as an individual in order to sexually desire them. Male brained individuals have a distant disconnect between feelings about a person as an individual and as a sex object.

Males can easily, sometimes preferably, have sex with a person they don't know, don't like or even actively dislike. Love and sex are two different worlds for the male brained. These two worlds can come together, and for most this is preferred, but it is not necessary, and for some, not even desired.

**Gender Identity** - The last of our five attributes, Gender identity, is the last to be identified, and the least understood and researched.

Gender identity is one's subjective sense of one's own sex. Like pain, it is unambiguously felt but one is unable to prove or display it to others.

One's subjective gender is just as real and immalleable as one's physical gender but unfortunately not recognised in our culture. When one's Gender Identity does not match one's Physical Gender, the individual is termed Gender Dysphoric. Like minority Sexual Orientation, Gender Dysphoria is not pathological, but a natural aberration occurring within the population, like blue eyes. As with minority sexual orientation, the percentage of the population having gender dysphoria is in dispute, with estimates ranging between 1 in 39,000 individuals up to three percent of the general population. My experience leads me to feel that the higher figure (3%) is closer to the actual prevalence.

But how would you know? A man born into a female body, but adjusted to the situation is unlikely to tell his son and his husband "Oh by the way, mommy is actually a guy", and certainly not if he's a stunning blonde with a curvaceous figure and an acting career. It's only if the Gender Dysphoria becomes too much to be borne that this all comes out - and the individual concerned often gets Sex Reassignment Surgery (S.R.S.), where their body tissues are modified to more closely approximate the body they know they should have had.

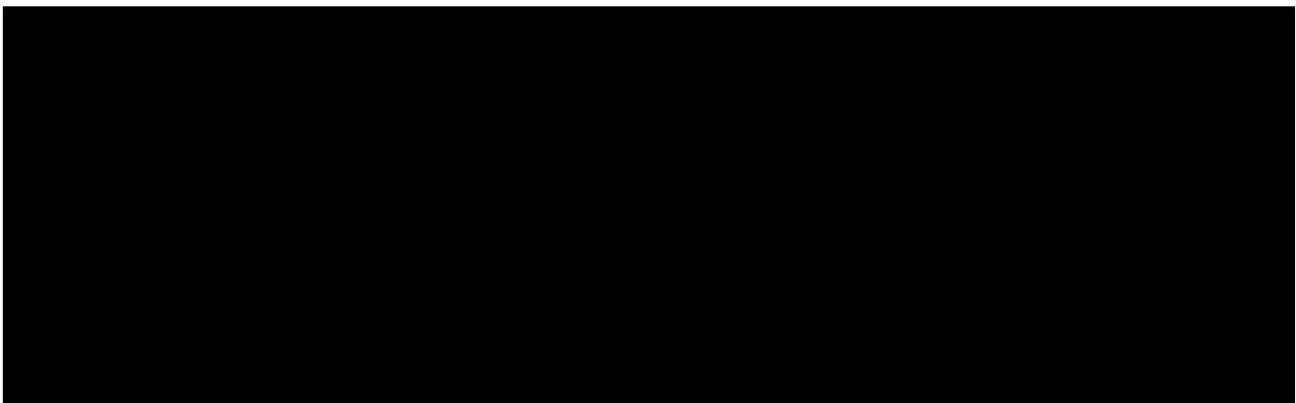
It is this phenomenon, Gender Identity, that the research shows may in fact be genetically determined.

I'm still waiting on my chromosome analysis results - which amongst other things, should tell me what genetic sex I am. Because you never can tell just by appearances.

## Zoe Brain

Zoe's profile on her [award-winning blog](#)  reads "Actually, I am a Rocket Scientist. Also hormonally odd (my blood has 46xy chromosomes anyway) and for most of my life, I looked male, and lived as one, trying to be the "best man a gal could be". Anyway, in May 2005 that started changing naturally for reasons still unclear, and I'm now Zoe, not Alan - happier and more relaxed not to have to pretend any more.

Her blog, simply titled: [A.E. Brain](#)  has been archived by the Australian National Library and features topics like brains, current events, feminism, space, software, science, and a wealth of information about her personal life, her transition, politics and religion, often with a transgender flavour and transgender human rights.





Video courtesy of [A.B.C.'s Hungry Beast](#) program and YouTube.

In 2010, Zoe was featured on the [A.B.C.'s Hungry Beast](#) program, and as [The Star Observer](#) newspaper reports: "Now *Hungry Beast* is turning its attention to telling the story of two intersex people. The [A.B.C.'s](#) new part-current affairs, part-sketch show speaks to Zoe Brain, a fifty-one-year-old aerospace engineer, who was born male. At the age of 47, her body suddenly changed to female over a three-month period. The *Hungry Beast* team follows Brain's meeting with twenty-three-year-old graphic designer Natalie Kirk, who was born with female anatomy except for under-developed ovaries. 'For some people it's just really hard to imagine anything but male and female. It's just that some people aren't either,' Kirk says. The show looks at the secrecy intersex people are often forced into, despite one in 100 people being intersex.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.