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Transvestism: A Survey of 1032 Cross-Dressers

Richard F. Docter, Ph.D.¹ and Virginia Prince, Ph.D.²

One thousand and thirty-two male periodic cross-dressers (transvestites) responded to an anonymous survey patterned after Prince and Benler's (1972) report. With few exceptions, the findings are closely related to the 1972 survey results. Eighty-seven percent described themselves as heterosexual. All except 17% had married and 60% were married at the time of this survey. Topics surveyed included demographic, childhood, and family variables, sexual orientation and sexual behavior, cross-gender identity, cross-gender role behavior, future plans to live entirely as a woman, and utilization of counseling or mental health services. Of the present sample, 45% reported seeking counseling compared to 24% of the 1972 survey, and those reporting strong transsexual inclinations were up by 5%. Today's transvestites strongly prefer both their masculine and feminine selves equally. A second research objective was to identify variables discriminating between so-called Nuclear (stable, periodic cross-dressers) and Marginal transvestites (more transgendered or transsexually inclined); 10 strongly discriminating parameters were found. The most important are (i) cross-gender identity, (ii) commitment to live entirely as a woman, (iii) taking steps toward body feminization, (iv) low sexual arousal to cross-dressing. Neither age nor experience as a cross-dresser were found to be correlates of cross-gender identity. Although the present generation of transvestites describe themselves much as did similar subjects 20 years ago, the percentage migrating toward full-time living as a woman is greater.

KEY WORDS: cross-dressing; cross-gender identity; gender dysphoria; gender identity; secondary transsexualism; transvestism; transgenderism; transsexualism.

¹Department of Psychology, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, California 91330-8255.

²Tri Ess: Society for the Second Self, P.O. Box 36091, Los Angeles, California 90036.

INTRODUCTION

In 1972, Prince and Bentler presented the results of a survey of 504 transvestites that has been widely relied upon; the present study is a replication of this earlier work. A principle reason for undertaking this study is that there have been several social changes over the past 20 years affecting cross-dressers. These developments have included the decriminalization of cross-dressing that existed in some jurisdictions, the formation of support groups in most of the larger cities of the world, informative television programs about cross-dressing and transsexualism, and the establishment of two national organizations addressing the concerns of cross-dressers and transsexuals. Our primary goal was to compare cross-dressers sampled a generation apart across the following variables: (i) demographic, childhood and family factors, (ii) sexual orientation and sexual behavior, (iii) cross-gender identity, (iv) cross-gender role behavior, (v) future plans to live entirely as a woman, (vi) reliance upon counseling or mental health services.

A secondary objective concerns the classification of transvestites. There is reason to believe that at least two subgroups of cross-dressers (excluding transgenderists and transsexuals) may be identified based on differences in cross-gender identity (Benjamin, 1966; Bentler, 1976; Blanchard *et al.*, 1987; Brierley, 1979; Buhrich and McConaghy, 1977, 1979). A variety of terminology has been used to identify these two groups. For the present report, we simply identify them as Groups 1 and 2. We believe these two groups are akin to the Nuclear and Marginal transvestite subgroups described by Buhrich and McConaghy (1977, 1979). A review of classification issues and reports of transvestite subgroups has been provided by Docter (1988). Summarizing across several reports, it would be predicted that cross-dressers assigned to our Group 1, as compared to Group 2, would be characterized by higher sexual arousal, lower cross-gender identity, propensity for heterosexual orientation, less propensity to feminize the body, and less motivation to live entirely as a woman. Group 2 cross-dressers would be predicted to show a stronger cross-gender identity, eagerness for feminization of the body, less sexual arousal associated with cross dressing, a propensity for sexual relationships with males, and transsexual inclinations including plans for living entirely as a woman. We divided the present sample into two groups differing in cross-gender identity; these groups were then compared across the variables noted above. Clarification of these two groups of cross dressers relates not only to the problem of classification but also to the little understood question of what variables, if any, may predict the evolution of periodic cross-dressers into full-time cross-dressers

who live entirely as women, with or without surgical or hormonal sex reassignment.

Throughout this report we use the term *cross-dresser* as synonymous with *transvestite*. When we use the term *transgenderist* we refer to individuals living continuously in the gender role opposite their genetic sex without sex reassignment procedures; if sexual reassignment has been completed we use the term *transsexual*.

METHOD

Our subjects were 1032 self-defined periodic cross-dressers, all of whom were biological males, ranging in age from 20 to 80. This volunteer nonrandom sample was acquired from throughout the United States by announcements at transvestite club meetings, conventions of cross-dressers, and in magazines and newsletters for cross-dressers. Nearly all subjects received the self-responsive survey form at one of these events; a small percentage were mailed to individuals who volunteered to participate. An unknown number of survey forms were reproduced by support groups and distributed to interested members. Our best estimate of the overall response rate is that roughly 30 to 35% were completed and returned. The data were collected over a 2-year span ending in 1992. All participation was anonymous. None of the subjects had any clinical relationship with either of the investigators. Geographically, all subjects were from the United States; while nearly all sections of the country are represented, the proportion drawn from larger cities is overrepresented. Probably this is because the largest transvestite support groups tend to be located in the biggest metropolitan areas. The questionnaires were completed individually and anonymously, and then mailed to a Los Angeles post office box. Participants were not compensated. Four percent said they had participated in the 1972 survey. Eighty percent said they were affiliated with either a cross-dressers' club or national organization.

Both the present subjects and those used by Prince and Bentler (1972) may best be described as convenience samples. Each sample was composed of volunteer respondents who were self-identified cross-dressers. The 1972 sample was considerably more difficult to obtain, requiring several years to acquire the 504 subjects. The 1032 subjects in our sample were easier to reach because of far more extensive transvestite club organization throughout the nation, and also because there are now several national publications that were used to invite the participation of our subjects.

There are several important differences between the 1972 sample and the larger group reported here. Of greatest importance may be the fact

that in 1972 the subjects were subscribers to *Transvestia* magazine. This publication, founded and edited by Virginia Prince, was designed to be of interest to heterosexual cross-dressers. As noted in the 1972 report, the editorial policy of *Transvestia* magazine explicitly avoided “. . . catering to individuals interested in homosexuality, sex conversion, sado-masochism, or pure fetishism.” Prince and Bentler noted, therefore, that their sample “. . . may well be different from other transvestites.” Our present sample was obtained by casting our net wider than in 1972. We actively sought the participation of cross-dressers from many organizations which encouraged membership without concern for heterosexual or homosexual orientation. Further, the content of cross-dressers’ publications is much more diverse than was seen in the 1970s. For example, contemporary magazines for cross-dressers frequently include extensive discussions of issues pertaining to living full-time in the cross-gender role, such as using female hormones, obtaining electrolysis, and legal aspects of making a gender change. The present sample, therefore, almost certainly represents a broader array of cross-dressers than did the 1972 group. However, as with the earlier study, our sample cannot be measured against the total population of cross-dressers in America because the attributes of such a population are not only unknown, they are virtually unknowable; many cross-dressers do not affiliate with any group or subscribe to transvestite magazines, and their behavior is unknown to outsiders.

The present sample is nonrepresentative in that it does not include cross-dressers such as female impersonators, so-called “drag queens,” or any substantial number of applicants for sex reassignment surgery. The exclusion of these cross-dressers almost certainly results in underestimating the percentage of homosexual men who would be self-identified cross-dressers. Equally important, our cross-dressers who elect to join support groups and subscribe to publications concerned with cross-dressing appear to be a more socially conventional and demographically “upscale” group. We also believe our sample is biased in favor of cross-dressers who believe research of this kind is worth giving their time to. If this is true, we reason that our sample probably includes a disproportionate number of better educated men who have both the time and motivation to complete an extensive survey form.

RESULTS

Demographic, Childhood, and Family Variables

For many of the variables shown in Table I, the present group of transvestites describe themselves as similar to the 504 subjects in the 1972 sam-

ple, although there are some substantial differences. One important difference may be age. The present sample includes a smaller percentage of younger subjects, compared to the earlier study, while having a higher proportion who are 40 and above. Later in this report we describe our more extensive analysis of the potential impact of age upon variables of interest. We also found differences in religious affiliation with fewer Protestants and far more respondents indicating "other religion" than in 1972. This may be due to geographic differences. About two thirds of our group had graduated from college which is similar to Prince and Bentler's finding. For occupational level, however, there was a difference of about 6% between the 1992 and the 1972 data; a higher percentage of our subjects tend to be at the upper levels of skilled and professional personnel. The present sample reported 60% married, down 4% from Prince and Bentler's group. Compared to the earlier study, we had more subjects who were married at some time (83 vs. 78%) but fewer who had fathered children (69 vs. 74%); this may well be a reflection of greatly expanded use of birth control alternatives. In both studies high percentages said they had been raised by both parents (76 vs. 82%), the father provided a "good masculine image" (76 vs. 72%), and that they had nearly all been raised "just as a boy" (86 vs. 83%).

While most of the chi-square values in Table I testing differences between the results of the two studies are statistically significant, the greatest difference for any variable in Table I is only 9%; hence, we have concluded that for these parameters our results are generally in line with the 1972 data. Many of the changes, such as a higher percentage reportedly being raised by a single parent, may be a reflection of changing family patterns across the past several decades. Physical parameters are identical with the Prince and Bentler data: for height the median fell within the range of 5 feet 8 inches to 6 feet; for weight, the median fell within the range of 160 to 180 pounds.

Sexual and Cross-Dressing Variables

Sexual and cross-dressing variables contrasting the two studies are summarized in Table II. As expected, the present sample is characterized by a strong preponderance of heterosexuals as was seen in 1972 (87 vs. 89%). The only comparatively large difference in sexual orientation is seen for a small subset who report themselves to be either "asexual or unsure" (5 vs. 1%). We found almost the same percentage as did Prince and Bentler for previous homosexual experience (29 vs. 28%). However, our subjects were much more likely to say they have a below average interest in having

Table I. Demographic, Childhood, and Family Variables: 1992 and 1972 Data

Variable	1992 (<i>N</i> = 1032) %	1972 (<i>N</i> = 504) %	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>
Age			118	0.0001	3
20-30	10	20			
30-40	33	34			
40-50	28	28			
≥50	29	18			
Religion			1737	0.0001	4
Catholic	24	23			
Protestant	38	57			
Jewish	3	4			
Agnostic/atheist	10	13			
Other	25	3			
Education beyond B.A.	65	63	2	0.18	1
Occupation			88	0.0001	5
Unskilled	12	17			
Skilled	16	21			
Business	26	24			
Arts	4	7			
Technical	21	14			
Professional	21	17			
Marital status			69	0.0001	2
Married now	60	64			
Separated, divorced, widowed	23	14			
Never married	17	22			
Ever been married	83	78	13	0.0004	1
Fathered children	69	74	14	0.0002	1
Raised by both parents through age 18	76	82	25	0.0001	1
Father provided good masculine image	76	72	8	0.005	1
Raised just as a boy	86	83	6	0.01	1

sex with women (26 vs. 14%). The two samples are quite different concerning the age reported for the onset of cross-dressing. The 1992 sample has a greater percentage reporting the initiation of cross-dressing before age 10 (66 vs. 54%) and a lower percentage starting after age 20 (5 vs. 8%).

Sexual excitement and orgasm have been linked with cross-dressing from the earliest clinical reports. Forty percent of the 1992 group said sexual excitement and orgasm were nearly always or often experienced with cross-dressing. Only 9% said this was "never" the case. This question was not included in the 1972 survey, nor was a question concerning the wearing of "feminine items when orgasm is not feasible." This nonorgasmic pleasure is acknowledged by 90% of our subjects as an occasional or more frequent accompaniment of cross-dressing.

Table II. Sexual and Cross-Dressing Variables: 1992 and 1972 Data

Variable	1992 (N = 1032) %	1972 (N = 504) %	χ^2	p	df
Sexual orientation			182	0.0001	3
Heterosexual	87	89			
Bisexual	7	9			
Homosexual	1	1			
Asexual or unsure	5	1			
Some homosexual experiences	29	28	0.48	0.49	1
Sexual interest in women			126	0.0001	2
Above average	17	24			
Average	57	62			
Below average	26	14			
Age began cross-dressing			57	0.0001	2
Before age 10	66	54			
Between 10 and 20	29	37			
After age 20	5	8			
View of self when cross-dressed			2	0.11	1
Express different part of myself	80	78			
Just myself with different clothes	20	22			
Cross-dressing brings sexual excitement and orgasm ^a					
Nearly always	21				
Often	19				
Occasionally	32				
Rarely	12				
Never	9				
Enjoy wearing feminine items when orgasm is not feasible ^a					
Frequently	41				
Often	24				
Occasionally	24				
Rarely	8				
Never	2				
Prefer complete cross-dressing	93	85	52	0.0001	1
Frequency of public cross-dressing			470	0.0001	2
Frequently	14	8			
Occasionally	48	23			
Rarely	38	69			
Have appear cross-dressed in public ^a	71				
Activities while cross-dressed ^a					
Ride on bus, train, etc.	10				
Eat in restaurants	28				
Plays, lectures church	18				
Tried on feminine clothing in stores	22				
Used ladies' room	26				
Seen by acquaintances who'd know me	17				
Experienced a "purge" of cross-dressing	75	69	17	0.0001	1
Wife is aware of your cross-dressing	83	80	6	0.02	1
Wife's acceptance or antagonism			30	0.0001	2
Completely accepting	28	23			
Mixed view	47	57			
Completely antagonistic	19	20			
Wife knew of your cross-dressing before marriage			13	0.0004	1
Yes	32	27			

^aNot available in 1972 study.

Since this sample was obtained from cross-dressers who typically have some kind of affiliation with a transvestite club or organization, it is not surprising that they express a very strong preference for complete cross-dressing rather than the more fetish-like partial cross-dressing. Usually, participation in a transvestite club necessitates complete cross-dressing because of the semipublic activities sponsored by such clubs. Additionally, the career of a cross-dresser often begins with partial cross-dressing and proceeds, often over many years, to complete cross-dressing (Buckner, 1970). Older subjects who are club members would therefore be expected to favor complete over partial transvestism. But when it comes to venturing out into public, many cross-dressers are not very bold. Only about a quarter of our subjects engage in the public activities shown in Table II. It is noteworthy that only 26% report having used ladies' restrooms. It appears that despite the national conventions and networks of cross-dressers clubs, many transvestites remain out of the mainstream of public activity.

Compared to the 1972 findings, a small percentage of our subjects are more likely to appear in public cross-dressed on a frequent basis (14 vs. 8%), and an even greater difference is seen for "occasionally" venturing out in public (48 vs. 23%). This apparent change in public participation may be one of the most important differences compared to the Prince and Bentler results. Virtually all statutes making it illegal for men to cross-dress in public have been invalidated over the past two or three decades.

There appears to be pervasive guilt associated with transvestism, for we found three quarters of our subjects reported a "purge" of their feminine attire at some time in their history (75 vs. 69%). This is invariably described as a product of intense feelings of wrongdoing and shame. There was little change in the awareness of wives concerning this activity (83 vs. 80%), but a greater percentage of the wives are said to be "completely accepting" (28 vs. 23%). The present subjects are also more inclined to inform their prospective wives about their cross-dressing before marriage (32 vs. 27%). Taken as a whole, we see many differences between the two samples, although the percentages for most variables in the two studies tend to be within a few points.

Cross-Gender Identity, Hormones, and Sex Reassignment

One of the most important differences separating periodic cross-dressers from transgenderists and transsexuals is cross-gender identity. Within the present sample, we would expect to see a subset of subjects who share various similarities with other cross-dressers, but who differ in the intensity of their cross-gender identity. Table III presents data bearing on cross-gen-

Table III. Cross-Gender Identity, Hormones, and Sexual Reassignment

	1992 (N = 1032) %	1972 (N = 504) %	χ^2	p	df
I feel myself to be			14	0.0007	2
Woman trapped, man's body	17	12			
Man with feminine side	74	69			
Fetishist, favor women's clothing	9	12			
Preferred gender identity			2221	0.0001	2
Masculine self	11	29			
Feminine self	28	56			
Equally	60	12			
Female hormones			28	0.0001	3
Not interested in using	48	41			
Would like to use	43	50			
Using hormones now	4	5			
Used hormones in the past	5	4			
If possible . . . would elect sex reassignment	17	14	12	0.005	1
Consulted psychologist or psychiatrist	45	24	248	0.0001	1
Helped by counseling	67	47	165	0.0001	1

der identity, body feminization through female hormones, and plans for future sexual reassignment.

Although about three-fourths of the present sample characterize themselves as "a man with a feminine side" (74 vs. 69%), we found an increase in the subgroup that feels like "a woman trapped in a man's body" (17 vs. 12%). Conversely, a small percentage of the present subjects attributed their cross-dressing to "fetishism" (9 vs. 12%). When asked about their preferred gender identity, the 1992 group differed markedly from the Prince and Bentler findings. Sixty percent of our group said they preferred the masculine and feminine self "equally" (compared to 12%). The masculine self was awarded very low preference (11 vs. 29%), and the preference for the feminine self was far less than in 1972 (28 vs. 56%). We discuss this later.

The use of female hormones is one of the persistent topics in the cross-dressing magazines of today. In view of the apparent high interest in this topic, it is surprising that only 5% of our subjects say they have ever used these hormones (vs. 4% earlier). Only 4% (vs. 5%) say they are using female hormones now, while nearly half of the present sample reported having no interest in using these hormones (48 vs. 41%). A strong percentage (43 vs. 50%) would like to use female hormones but they are not doing so at present.

Groups 1 and 2

We divided the present sample into two groups using the following question: "I feel myself to be: (a) a woman trapped in a man's body (b) a man who has a feminine side that seeks expression occasionally (c) a man with a sexual fetish for feminine clothing." Group 1 was defined as the 747 cross-dressers who selected item (b); Group 2 was defined as the 172 cross-dressers who selected item (a). Subjects selecting more than one option were excluded, as were all who selected option (c). Large differences between Groups 1 and 2 were found in response to 10 of our survey questions (Table IV).

No difference between Groups 1 and 2 were seen for the following variables: married now, ever married, fathered children, parents divorced, separated, or deceased, parents overprotective, parents discouraged rough-and-tumble play, hugged and stroked as child, sexually aroused by specific items of women's clothing, enjoy cross-dressing even when sexual release is not feasible, age of first cross-dressing, prefer complete cross-dressing, experienced a "purge" of cross-dressing, consulted psychologist concerning cross-dressing, and belong to cross-dressing, organization. In contrast, we found marked differences between Groups 1 and 2 for the 10 variables listed in Table IV.

In a separate analysis concerned with Groups 1 and 2, we used nine subjects from each of these groups in a Q-factor analysis. This procedure begins with a data set having subjects and their respective data in the columns, with survey variables in the rows. Hence, the positions of the subjects and the variables are reversed from the more familiar R-factor analysis (Comrey and Lee, 1992). Ninety-six survey responses were the variables for each subject. If the data profiles for the two groups differ, two or more factors would be expected to emerge. But our Q-factor analysis yielded a

Table IV. Percentages for Groups 1 and 2 for Variables Having Large Group Differences

Variable	% Group 1 (n = 737)	% Group 2 (n = 169)	χ^2	p	df
Desire sex change now	8	66	698	0.0001	1
Plan to live full-time . . . woman	7	49	477	0.0001	1
Prefer masc./fem. self equally	71	22	360	0.0001	2
Using female hormones now	1	14	226	0.0001	3
Low sexual interest in women	13	36	84	0.0001	2
Heterosexuality	91	65	49	0.0001	4
Use ladies rest rooms	24	41	27	0.0001	1
Many homosexual experiences	1	4	22	0.0001	2
Playmates were mostly boys	55	44	21	0.0001	2
Cross-dressing seldom sexual	28	40	15	0.0005	4

single factor accounting for 77% of the variance in the data set. Groups 1 and 2 did not have different factor loadings based on either an orthogonal or oblique solution. A second Q-factor analysis was then carried out using future gender plans as the criterion for assignment into Groups 1 and 2. Subjects who said they intended to live full-time in the cross-gender role were placed in Group 2 (so-called Marginal transvestites). Those who said they did not anticipate changing their periodic cross-dressing habits were assigned to Group 1 (so-called Nuclear transvestites). Again, nine subjects were placed in each group. Again, a single factor accounted for most of the variance (84%) and there were no differences in the loadings on this factor for subjects in Group 1 versus those in Group 2.

DISCUSSION

This large sample of transvestites responded to many of our survey questions much as did the subjects assessed a generation earlier (Prince and Bentler, 1972), although there are several differences. In examining such differences, we must recall that the present sample included a larger proportion of older subjects compared to the 1972 sample. One explanation for this would be that the membership of the cross-dressing clubs and organizations, from which we recruited our subjects, was overrepresented by older subjects. This seems logical, as individuals who enjoy such club affiliation often sustain their membership over many years, thereby boosting the proportion of older members. Such sustained affiliation was not possible in 1972, as many of the clubs from which we recruited were just getting organized. It is not clear why our sample included a smaller percentage of younger subjects than reported by Prince and Bentler, but in our experience, the proportion of individuals ages 20 to 30 who are currently transvestite club members is substantially lower than for older individuals. A possible explanation is that today, in contrast to 20 years ago, bars and similar social environments where cross-dressers may visit *en femme* are more available than they were a generation ago. The reasoning follows that some of the younger cross-dressers may elect such gathering places in favor of cross-dressing clubs; if so, they would less likely become a part of our sample.

Demographic, Childhood, and Family Variables

As seen in Table I most of the present sample described themselves as members of cross-dressers organizations who were employed in, at the

least, middle-class jobs, married with families, and as typically having been raised “. . . just as a boy . . .” by both parents, and with a father who provided a good “. . . masculine image . . .” Schott (1995) has previously reported that cross-dressers do not tend to come from highly distressed families and this was also noted by Prince and Bentler (1972). All except 17% had at some time been married; 60% were married at the time of the survey. The remaining 23% who had not remarried were either separated (24%), widowed (12%), or divorced (64%). These findings are in harmony with the Prince and Bentler results. We are unable to report an exact divorce rate because of the form of this question on both the 1972 and the present survey. As seen in the 1972 study, a high proportion of our subjects reported superior educational achievement; nearly two thirds described some education beyond the baccalaureate degree. Education, however, may be a biasing selection factor in the formation of a volunteer sample such as ours. Subjects who are better educated and more research oriented are probably more likely to complete a multipage survey. Occupationally, our sample spans the continuum from unskilled and unemployed through subjects at the highest levels of professional achievement. As shown in Table I, our percentages for many variables yielded a significantly different chi-square values from the proportions that we expected based on the Prince and Bentler results. For the variables reported in Table I; our main conclusion is that many of the present results are similar to the 1972 results, although some marked changes are seen. Exactly what may best explain such changes and the role played by sampling variation cannot be established from our data alone.

Sexual and Cross-Dressing Variables

Eighty-seven percent of our subjects described themselves as heterosexual; the remaining 13% said they were either bisexual, homosexual, asexual, or unsure of how to describe their sexual orientation. Sixty-five percent of the other-than-heterosexual subjects met the criterion for assignment to Group 2; within Group 1, 91% reported a heterosexual orientation. We also assessed the amount of homosexual experience. In Group 1, 1% reported “many” such experiences and in Group 2 the percentage was 4%; the rest indicated “none” or “a few” such experiences. However, we caution that these proportions may be spuriously low as we did not assess bisexual encounters as distinct from homosexual experiences. Some cross-dressers regard their cross-dressed sexual relations with males as bisexual or heterosexual, not homosexual. As shown in Table II, nearly all cross-dressers report deriving pleasurable feelings, and often, sexual gratification associ-

ated with cross-dressing. It is likely that cross-dressing is not the product of a single set of narrowly defined reinforcers, or anything as specific as sexual pleasure alone.

Two thirds of our subjects report some kind of first cross-dressing experience prior to the age of 10, but it is not clear from our survey that such an experience necessarily marked the beginning of a career as a cross-dresser. This question awaits additional study. A quarter of our subjects said they considered themselves "below average" in their sexual interest in women. This may, in part, be related to the fact that 72% said that they linked their cross-dressing, at least occasionally, with sexual arousal and orgasm; 21% said their cross-dressing was always paired with orgasm, while 9% said this was never the case, and 19% said it was rarely so. Ninety percent of our subjects said they enjoyed some cross-dressing even when "sexual release was not feasible," suggesting that many of the clothing and cognitive stimuli associated with transvestism acquire importance as secondary reinforcers independent of orgasmic reinforcement. This may be a factor in the often-reported tenacity of cross-dressing behavior. Ninety-three percent of our subjects reported a strong preference for complete cross-dressing. While 71% said they had at some time appeared in a public setting cross-dressed, only about one quarter reported such activities as riding on busses or trains, eating in restaurants, attending plays or lectures, shopping and trying on women's apparel or being seen by an acquaintance who might recognize them despite their feminine attire. Only 26% said they had used ladies' rest rooms which strongly suggests that most of our sample has done little sustained venturing out into public venues. The fear of ladies' rooms reflects the cross-dresser's concern for local ordinances which often forbid the presence of men in women's toilet facilities. Taken as a whole, we conclude that even cross-dressers who elect to join clubs overwhelmingly elect to express their transvestism privately, or in highly controlled club-sponsored settings.

Wives

The wives of transvestites have complained that the solitary sexual satisfaction of a cross-dresser husband can often be detrimental to marital sexual fulfillment (Bullough and Weinberg, 1988; Docter, 1988). Buckner (1970) has described how some cross-dressers may construct a "pseudo-relationship" featuring themselves as their ideal female partner, offering infinite possibilities for enacting fantasy-based sexual scripts. It was not surprising, therefore, that 19% of the wives were described as "completely antagonistic" to their husband's cross-dressing, while at the other extreme

28% were said to be "completely accepting." The remainder are said to share less clear-cut attitudes. Eighty-three percent of the wives were said to be aware of their husbands transvestism which is similar to the 1972 report. Only one-third of the wives had been informed of their husband's cross-dressing before marriage; this is 5% higher than reported in 1972.

Cross-Gender Identity, Female Hormones, and Sexual Reassignment

Several studies have emphasized that one of the major differences distinguishing periodic cross-dressers from transgenderists and transsexuals is cross-gender identity (for a summary, see Docter, 1988). We define cross-gender identity as the propensity to view oneself as having core personality attributes and self-perceived gender characteristics opposite one's genetic sex. Some investigators have subsumed cross-gender identity under the more global term, *gender dysphoria*. For a genetic male, the end product of an intense and sustained sense of cross-gender identity could be a complete gender role change, as in transgenderism or transsexualism, and as we shall describe, this is by no means rare. There are many examples of men, who for decades have expressed their transvestism through periodic cross-dressing, who, in their later years, make a complete gender reversal and live entirely as women (Benjamin, 1966; Docter, 1988; Person and Ovesey, 1974). With this subgroup in mind, note the results in Table III. Seventeen percent of our sample described themselves as "a woman trapped in a male body"; this is 5% greater than the 1972 results. It is not clear what may best explain this increase, but the fact that our sample includes more older than younger subjects does not seem to be the reason. Using chi-square statistics, we found no difference across the five age ranges for future plans to live as a woman, $\chi^2(4, N = 1028) = 2.56, p = 0.63$, the expected 13% were found within each age range. Similarly, when the same question was analyzed comparing Groups 1 and 2, we found no difference between the two groups when age was considered relative to future plans to live entirely as a woman, $\chi^2(3, N = 919) = 1.95, p = 0.58$. Other reports (Blanchard, 1993; Doorn *et al.*, 1994) have shown that the intensity of cross-gender identity in transvestites is not highly related to age. Whatever the origins of cross-gender identity, it appears likely that this is not an attribute that is simply the product of years of experience as a cross-dresser.

A marked change from 1972 data was seen when our subjects were asked whether they preferred their masculine selves, feminine selves, or both selves equally. Sixty percent of our sample preferred "both selves equally," compared to only 12% in 1972. This unusually great change may

be a reflection of a theme strongly advocated in transvestite magazines and newsletters—that it is healthy and desirable to have an integration of the masculine and feminine components of one's personality. Personality integration, of course, is also a major objective in many forms of counseling and psychotherapy.

Female Hormones

Only 4% of our respondents reported they were currently taking female hormones, down slightly from the 5% reported in 1972. An additional 5% of our sample had taken hormones in the past; nearly half said they were not interested in using hormones. When asked the hypothetical question: "If I were single and financially able at the present time, I would have a sex-change operation even now," 17% said "yes" compared to 14% reported by Prince and Bentler. Thirty-nine percent of those who would elect sex reassignment, given the above hypothetical provisions, were from Group 1, while 61% were from Group 2. It is clear that feelings of intense cross-gender identity and the desire for sex reassignment are by no means restricted to cross-dressers in Group 2. The present data support our independent observations of cross-dressers followed for more than a decade that roughly 15–20% of the so-called periodic crosser-dressers active in transvestite clubs eventually come to live as full-time transgenderists or transsexuals. We believe this is a far greater percentage than previously identified. We suspect that the many societal changes that have had an impact upon cross-dressers over the past decade, as listed in our introductory paragraph, may contribute to this development. Additionally, those periodic transvestites who become transgenderists or transsexuals, serve as powerful role models for other cross-dressers. In our experience, the most likely time for transitions into full-time living as a woman is during the age range of 50 to 65. During these years several major life changes may occur calling for reexamination of life-style. Such changes, may include occupational readjustment, retirement, divorce, death of parents and other loved ones, or change of location. Such changes promote more than a call for personal renewal and reorganization of relationships; for some cross-dressers, changes like these may be regarded as doors of opportunity swinging open to permit the complete expression of one's feminine gender identity. Person and Ovesey (1974) referred to this phenomenon as secondary transsexualism. This type of transgenderism or transsexualism is seen in heterosexual transvestites whose sexual and gender histories are radically different from transsexuals having a homosexual history.

Counseling and Psychotherapy

A much higher proportion of our subjects reported consulting with either a psychiatrist or a psychologist than reported by Prince and Bentler (45 vs. 24%) and 67% of those seeking these services said they had received some benefit. In 1972, only 47% felt they had been helped. We suspect that most mental health professionals who are attempting to assist cross-dressers and their families are working with more accurate information and have received better training on this topic than was generally provided a generation ago. Other social changes which may have affected both the willingness to seek counseling and a positive response to such helping activity would be the addition of social workers, marriage and family counselors, and sex counselors as service-offering mental health professionals, and also, a marked increase in health insurance coverage for counseling services.

Group 1 Versus Group 2

In a series of studies, Buhrich and McConaghy (1977, 1979) followed a group of club member cross-dressers and concluded that three subtypes could be identified: a predominantly transvestite group they named Nuclear Transvestites, a more transsexually inclined group they called Marginal Transvestites, and finally, a Transsexual group, living entirely as women. Since transsexuals were not included in the present sample, we concern ourselves only with the first two of these groups. Our Group 1 is similar to Buhrich and McConaghy's Nuclear group, and our Group 2 is, we believe, comparable to their Marginal group. Very large chi-square values indicative of large differences between these groups are seen for the first four of the variables listed in Table IV: (i) The most powerful variable distinguishing the two groups was the desire to have a sex change operation providing certain preconditions were met. (ii) Group 2 marginal transvestites were more likely to have future plans to live full-time as a woman. (iii) While most Group 1 men preferred both their "masculine and feminine selves equally," the Group 2 respondents reject this in favor of preferring their "feminine selves." (iv) Only 1% of the Group 1 transvestites were currently using female hormones, while the proportion is 14% of Group 2. Hormone usage was one of the group differences reported by Buhrich and McConaghy (1977, 1979). Six other variables also separated Group 1 and Group 2, although the chi-square values were lower.

The 10 variables listed in Table IV appear to be critical as classificatory criteria for nuclear and marginal transvestism. But along many other di-

mensions these two groups do not differ significantly as shown by our two Q-factor analyses. It is when these groups are contrasted using the variables noted in Table IV that substantial differences are seen.

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