

Gender Dysphoria from a Non-binary Perspective

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Beyond the Sex/Gender Binaries

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- So I'll try to define terms more inclusively than in the American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-IV-TR*, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision, and other standard sources.

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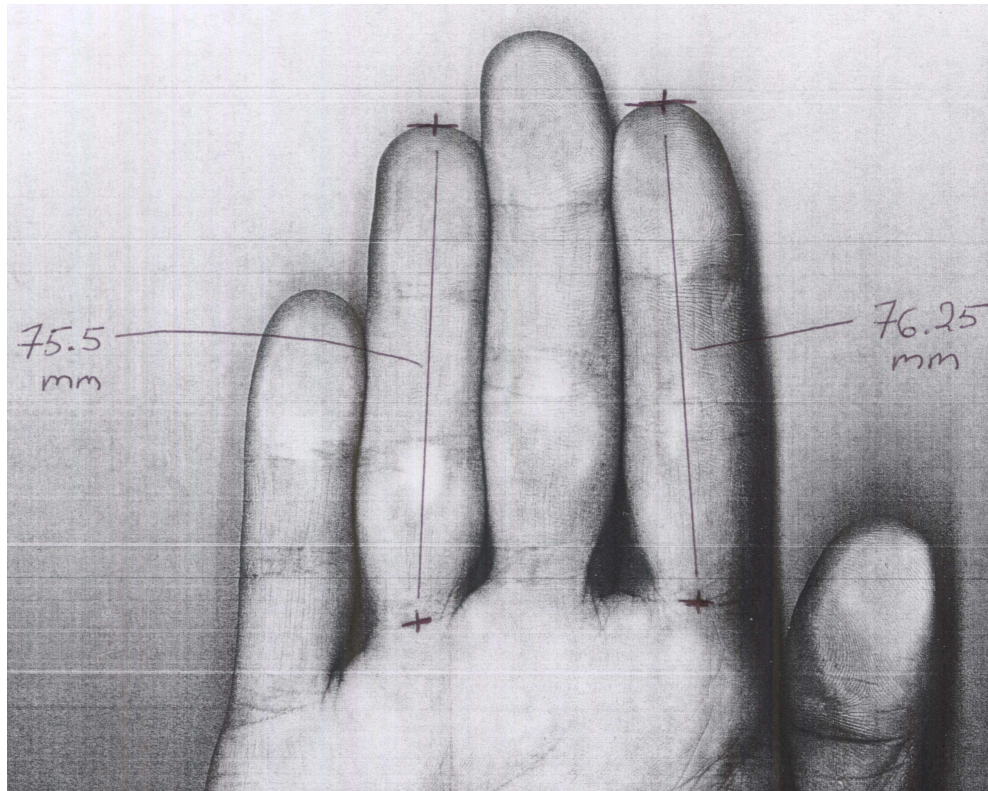
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- secondary sex characteristics, and
- brain structure as influenced by prenatal sex hormones.

Finger-length Ratios

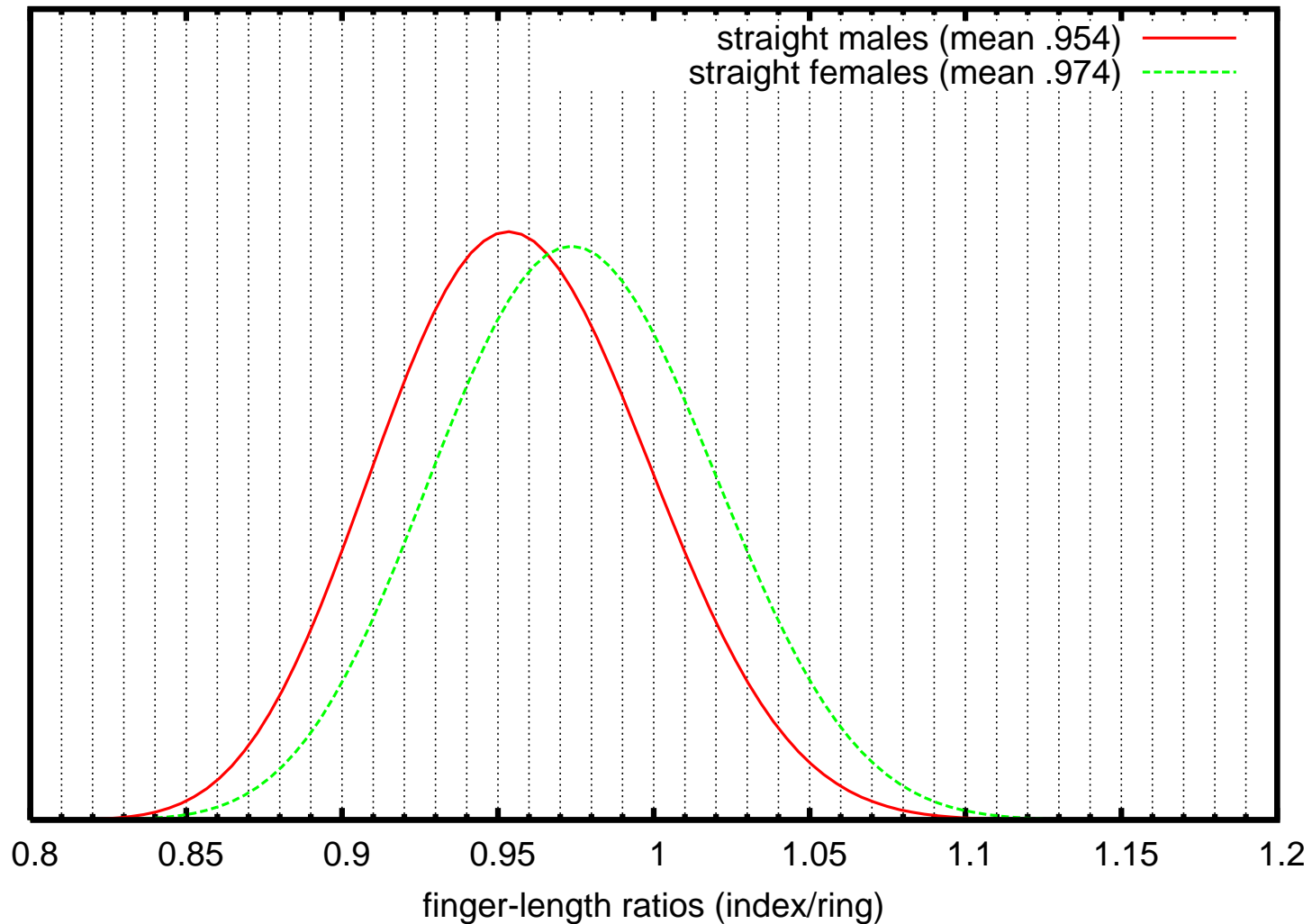
A *finger-length* ratio is computed by dividing the length (tip to bottom of crease) of the index finger by the length of the ring finger.



In this example, we get $76.25/75.5 = 1.01$, which is significantly above the straight female average of 0.974.

Finger-length Ratio Distributions

Finger-length ratios are positively correlated with prenatal estrogen/testosterone ratios.



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- Doctors are charged with assigning a binary sex to each baby.
- Most of us are blind to sex diversity.

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- conversational style,
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- dress style, etc.

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- There are many genders—not even a gender continuum (a person can be nurturing and aggressive, or non-nurturing and non-aggressive, etc.).
- Thus gender is multi-dimensional.

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- Branding is both positive and negative.
- Branding has a major impact on our lives.

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- If brought up by aliens, how could a baby have a sense of being “male” or “female”?
- As children, we intuit/learn our gender identities by comparing ourselves with others, consciously or unconsciously.

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- But it could be more open-ended process of paying attention to someone, more fully understanding who they are, what their gender attributes are.

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- A person’s actual *gender expression*—the way sie expresses hir gender—may be inconsistent with the gender role assigned to hir.

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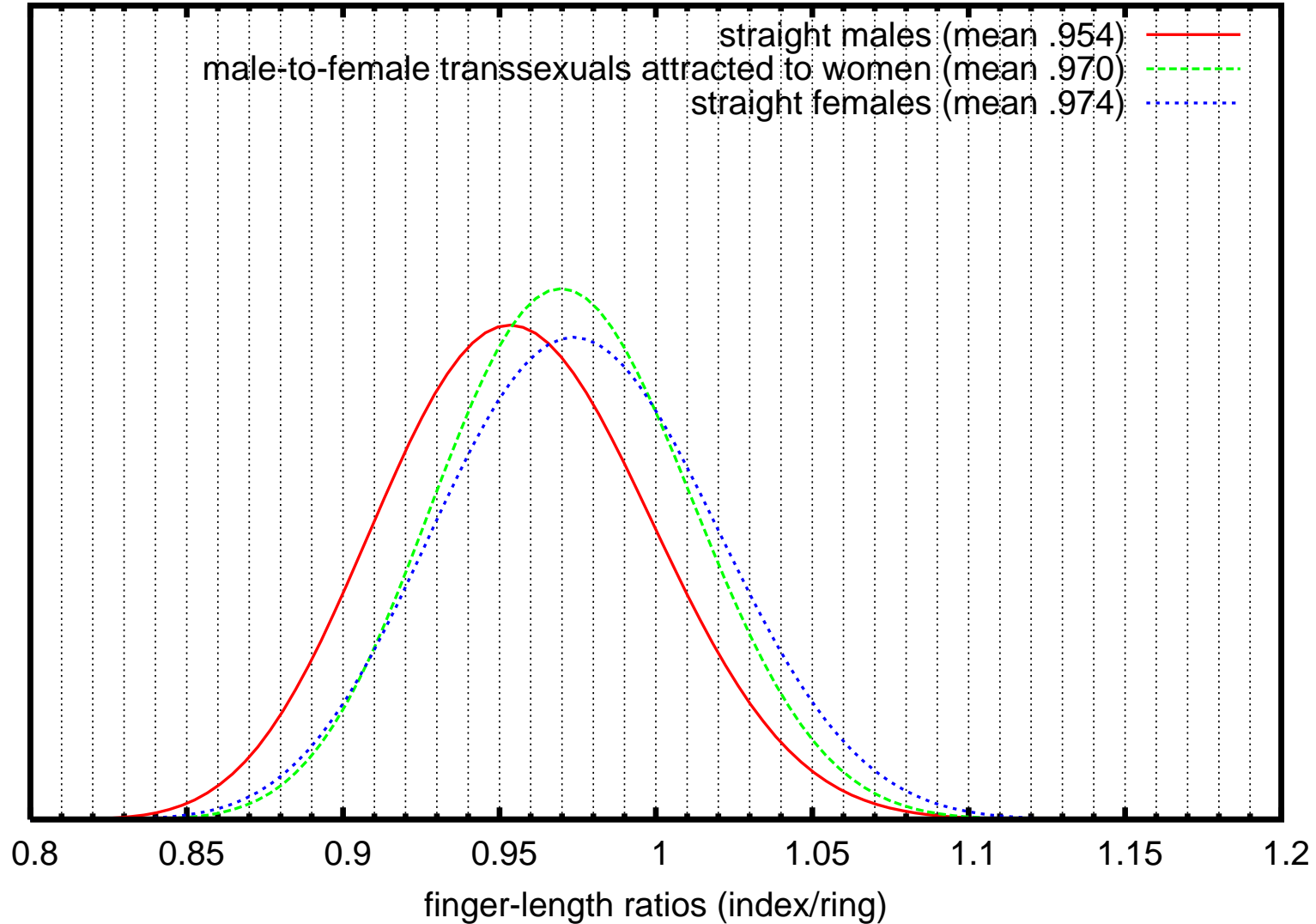
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gender dysphoria, coupled with a desire/plan to make physical and/or social changes to ameliorate that dysphoria.

Origins of Gender Dysphoria: Mild Intersexuality

Gender dysphoria may be prenatally caused to some extent:



Origins of Gender Dysphoria: How Others See Us

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- But in our branded system, people may attribute gender brands to us that neglect or ignore our actual gender aggregates, using assumed binary sex to infer a gender brand.
- We may be uncomfortable with our own bodies because we think others will only see and relate to us as we wish if our bodies conform to their brand-based expectations, in which sexes and genders must go together.

Origins of Gender Dysphoria: How We See Ourselves

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- A baby brought up by aliens wouldn't develop a feeling of having the "wrong" genitals, with no access to human role models.
- Of course, most transsexuals feel the need to make at least some bodily changes, in order to feel good about their bodies.

Ameliorating Gender Dysphoria: Recognizing Gender Diversity

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- Recognizing gender diversity would encourage the breakdown of gender branding.
- Having our genders recognized would lessen gender dysphoria.

Ameliorating Gender Dysphoria: Transformation

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- But some people find making such transformations impossible, impractical or undesirable.

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- Logistical problem: public restrooms (going into a restroom brands a person).
- How are we to recognize intergenders, so we can support them?

Ameliorating Gender Dysphoria: Expressing Allegiance to a Gender Brand

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- How far this can stretch is debatable—if a feminine person with a masculine body uses gender expression to express a female gender identity, could people relate to her appropriately?
- But already some transsexuals who can't or don't want to pass are finding more acceptance in society by expressing their allegiance to a gender brand.

Ameliorating Gender Dysphoria: Expressing Allegiance to a Gender Brand

- Perhaps gender attribution can become a process of intuiting the gender brand that someone is trying to express, understanding that this brand indicates the person's gender identity and desired gender role, and attempting to view and relate to the person according to that role.
- How far this can stretch is debatable—if a feminine person with a masculine body uses gender expression to express a female gender identity, could people relate to her appropriately?
- But already some transsexuals who can't or don't want to pass are finding more acceptance in society by expressing their allegiance to a gender brand.
- Fortunately, many transsexuals and their partners find that genitals and secondary sexual characteristics are far less relevant than how we use and think about them, and than our gender aggregates.

Slides and Feedback

The slides for this talk are available at:

<http://people.cis.ksu.edu/~stough/cultural/>

And feedback or questions about this work can be communicated to me at:

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