

Dr. Hipocrates

Eugene Schoenfeld M.D.

1972

Dear Dr. Schoenfeld:

We find it difficult to relate to a “straight” doctor. What is the best way for us to find a gay doctor? Should we ask the A.M.A.? Or the county medical society?



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.
Photo: Alan Gotkin.

ANSWER: A doctor should be able to relate well to all patients, whatever their sexual orientation. If he (she, etc.) does, the patients will also feel comfortable.

County medical societies and the A.M.A. do not yet list homosexual physicians as a sub-specialty. Perhaps a local homophile organization can refer you to a doctor of your choice.

Dear Dr. Schoenfeld:

I am 16 years old, male, and transsexual (a person who feels he or she is imprisoned in the body of the opposite sex—ed.). If I told my parents, they would only laugh at me while they found a good psychiatrist. I want help badly, but not the kind of help a psychiatrist can give me.

I want my face modified so that I will look and feel truly feminine. I would like some kind of implant to approximate the feeling and appearance of the natural breast. I want my waist taken in and my legs and hips expanded and shaped to complete the female figure. I want an accurate simulation of the female genitals, including construction of an artificial vagina.

I won't mind being used for experiments if I can get what I need by doing so. I just can't function normally or to the best of my ability as a male. Please help.

ANSWER: First of all, you have too much faith in the wonders of plastic surgery. Thousands of sex change operations have been performed but the face, legs and hips can't be molded like putty. Breasts can be enlarged with hormone injections and silicone. Artificial vaginas seem to function well but, of course, pregnancy cannot occur after such an operation.

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More importantly, no reputable physician would consider a sex change operation in someone your age. Adolescence is a difficult time of life for most people. Often one's thoughts seem shameful or confusing. If there's no one to confide in, the situation may appear to be desperate.

You surely need counseling from someone who will be objective and helpful. There's a Free Clinic in your city and I suggest you contact them soon.

Dear Dr. Schoenfeld:

I'm 26, mother of one, and possibly soon to be mother of two. My question concerns the detection of pregnancy.

My husband said that during foreplay, he could feel an enlargement around my cervix ("like a fairly hard swelling"). I examined myself internally and sure enough, something had grown inside. Could this have something to do with a developing fetus?

I've had a few other symptoms—but have never heard of this being a sign.

P.S.—Our first child's middle name is after you.

ANSWER: The cervix usually feels about like the tip of one's nose. An early sign of pregnancy is softening of the cervix. The surrounding tissues may then feel hard by comparison.

But please, please see a gynecologist without further delay. Any unusual growth is cause for alarm. A little bit of knowledge may be dangerous—there's no way your husband, you or I can know whether he felt a soft cervix, firm feces in the adjacent canal or a tumor. But a physician can tell you very quickly after a pelvic examination.

And I'm most pleased to learn of your child's middle name.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BULLETIN!

Poison oak and ivy can be transmitted from one itchy body to another. Or from one person's clothes and sheets to another. Does anyone have any poison oak/ivy cures? Scratch, scratch.

Dear Dr. Schoenfeld:

I am bald—if I have a vasectomy will it make my hair grow back? Also, what are other things it will do and prevent you from doing? Will I be able to function and climax as I do now?

I tried the library and they had nothing on the subject.

ANSWER: You are confusing vasectomies with castration. Vasectomies are minor surgical procedures in which the two tubes transporting sperm (vas deferens) from the testes are cut and tied off. Sexual functioning continues as it did before, except that sperm cells are absent from the semen. Most of the seminal fluid comes from the prostate gland, so the volume of ejaculated fluid changes very little.

Castration means removal of the testicles, which also produces sterility. Male pattern baldness is often halted after castration, but I'd be very surprised if you wanted to make the trade.

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