

The logo consists of two stylized, interlocking shapes that resemble the letter 'S' or 'O', one in black and one in purple.

SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN SEXOLOGISTS

Intersex Human Rights - My Body, My Choice

In Australia, nearly 2% of children born are intersex (1). Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for young people who are intersex to undergo surgery to modify sexual organs to fit into “female” or “male” binary (2). Young people who undergo such surgeries are not giving informed consent, nor are they given appropriate care following the procedures.

The effects of these surgeries, many times called “gender normalising” surgeries, are lifelong and many times detrimental for the individual with major adverse effects. The discussion around illegalising these interventions is a crucial conversation. Medical interventions are not typically performed unless both consent and appropriate care are present; standards that should be carried across when considering surgery for intersex people.

Intersex people face mental health struggles at a disproportionate rate, with 50% reporting psychological problems associated with their sexual orientation (3). Intervening with and changing the makeup of individuals from a young age is only compounding the heteronormative societal norms many people do not identify with. Nor should they need to.

The Society of Australian Sexologists (SAS) welcomes the pledge by Equity Australia which calls for every state and territory to implement laws to stop these medical procedures. The pledge calls for reforms in every state and territory to support the education for, and choice given to, each individual.

Whilst Victoria have publicly announced they will end the procedures, laws are not yet in place to protect intersex individuals around the above issues. Creating such laws will support intersex people in improving their sense of identity and belonging in a world of diverse individuals.

SAS encourages your support in signing the pledge for the education, protection, and care for intersex individuals.

References:

Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People. https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/7_FTF_2014_LGBTI.pdf
Tiffany Jones (2016) The needs of students with intersex variations, Sex Education, 16:6, 602-618, DOI: [10.1080/14681811.2016.1149808](https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2016.1149808)