

Transsexual  
Surgery

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# Stanford plans no revisions in sex change program

By Bill Burger  
Staff Writer

Dr. Norman Fiske of the Stanford University Medical Center's sex change clinic said there will be no revisions in the program there in light of Johns Hopkins Hospital's decision to stop performing the operations.

Fiske said he has been aware for several years of the situation which caused Johns Hopkins to halt the program and said the decision was no surprise to him.

An article in the August issue of Archives of General Psychiatry by Dr. Jon Meyer,

associate professor of psychiatry and director of the Hopkins clinic, reported he had compared 24 transsexuals to a group of 26 who had undergone counseling but never had the operation.

Meyer wrote, "What we have found is that both operated and non-operated transsexuals improved roughly to an equal extent and that, in fact, the non-operated group's improvement was statistically more significant."

Fiske said the Stanford clinic has encountered some of the same problems as Johns Hop-

kins but has "decided to deal with them in a different way."

He said Stanford has opted for a more "conservative selection process" in screening candidates for the surgery. About 10 percent of persons entering the counseling program eventually undergo the surgery, Fiske said.

He said two years ago the clinic surveyed the more than 200 persons who had the surgery in the past 11 years and that the patients responded "uniformly" that they were happier since the operation and had no regrets about their decision.

Fiske said clinic officials "didn't necessarily think they were all doing better," but that "we're not surprised that our people are doing very well."

Fiske said he thought Johns Hopkins, which pioneered the sex change surgery in the early '60s, "perhaps needed more selective patient screening."

The Stanford program has become more conservative in its selection of patients who undergo the surgery.

He called the surgery a "very radical treatment that has the potential to do a very great deal of good if applied

correctly and also the potential to do bad if misapplied."

Fiske said the Stanford clinic, which performs about three operations each month, is the nation's largest university sex change program.

He said persons from the Stanford program visited Johns Hopkins before opening the clinic and "may have benefited from their mistakes."

Fiske said he believes the Stanford clinic can "very accurately determine who will benefit and who will do well from the change and who won't."