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Concerns Raised in Congress as 2 Youths Commit Suicide in Taxpayer-Funded Cross-Sex Hormone Study

Lawmakers seek answers on what they call transgender 'experiments'

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Chloe Cole, an 18-year-old woman who regrets surgically removing her breasts, holds testosterone medication used for transgender patients in Northern California on Aug. 26, 2022. (John Fredricks/The Epoch Times)



By [Darlene McCormick Sanchez](#)
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Lawmakers are demanding answers after the suicide deaths of two young people involved in a transgender hormone study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Additionally, 11 participants reported suicidal thoughts during the study, according to a January article by researchers published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) (NEJM).

In a [letter](#) to Dr. Lawrence Tabak, acting director at NIH, 15 Republican lawmakers question why the study wasn't halted after participants died or reported adverse effects.

"It is alarming that vulnerable young people died by suicide while participating in a taxpayer-funded study that will almost certainly inflict devastating physical harm on those who participated," the lawmakers' letter stated.



Acting Director of the National Institutes of Health Dr. Lawrence Tabak testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on May 17, 2022. (SHAWN THEW/POOL/AFP via Getty Images)

“Rather than shutting the study down after such serious adverse events, the researchers published their paper, concluding that the study was a success because cross-sex hormones had altered subjects’ physical appearance and improved psychosocial functioning,” lawmakers added.

The study “Psychosocial Functioning in Transgender Youth after 2 Years of Hormones” attempted to analyze the psychosocial state of participants.

Researchers evaluated the impact of cross-sex hormones on “transgender and nonbinary youth” between the ages of 12 and 20, according to the study.

NIH awarded \$477,444 in a five-year grant to the Boston Children’s Hospital, the University of California at San Francisco, and the Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago for the study, according to a report in [The Daily Signal](#). Dr. Diane Chen at the Lurie Children’s Hospital led the study.

Lawmakers have blasted the study for subjecting children to “radical gender ideology.” Of 315 study subjects, 240 were minors.

After the study was published, the medical watchdog group “[Do No Harm](#),” called the research “fatally flawed and borderline unscientific” because it muddled instead of clarified questions about the medical transition of children.

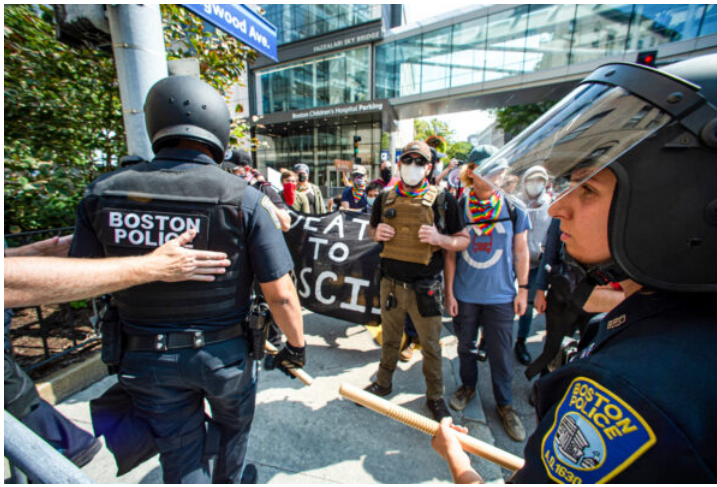
Twenty-four participants in the study received cross-sex hormones after puberty suppression—when they’re “in early puberty”—and are “likely sterile as a result,” according to the lawmakers.

Lawmakers said that other risks to participants include an increased chance of cardiovascular disease and blood clotting. They also questioned the value of a study that didn’t include a “control group.”

The letter stated the taxpayer-funded research was already being used to further the “fallacy” that chemically transitioning children was safe and effective despite “glaring shortfalls.”

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Police face pro-transgender protesters outside of Boston Children's Hospital in Boston, Mass., on Sept. 18, 2022. (JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP via Getty Images)

The study didn't dwell on the suicides. Instead, it reported "positive" effects of cross-sex hormones, such as "life satisfaction" and decreases in depression and anxiety—at least for the duration of the study.

Republicans charged that some involved in the study were known transgender activists focused on gender modification for children.

60%

In a video later removed from Boston Children's Hospital's YouTube channel, the hospital claimed "that children can know their gender identity 'from the womb,'" lawmakers said.

According to the letter, Johanna Olson, a co-author of the NEJM article, received a federal grant for a study in which she altered protocol to allow children as young as 8 years old to receive cross-sex hormones.

The lawmakers noted in their objection that research shows gender dysphoria in minors often resolves by itself as struggling teenagers progress through puberty, "completely undermining the idea that children should have their bodies permanently altered to match their changing identities."

They added that the NIH plans to give more than \$10.6 million to "experiment on children and adolescents through 2026."

Rep. Josh Brecheen (R-Okla.) and Sen. Ted Budd (R-N.C.) led the letter demanding responses to questions by June 9.

Questions included the age of the suicide victims, the clinic that administered the hormones, and what steps may have been taken to halt and review the study when the deaths occurred.

Lawmakers also want to know if any steps were taken to provide ongoing monitoring of other children participating in the study to ensure that they are not at risk for suicide.

70%

They also asked if participants had been evaluated for sterility or impaired fertility as a result of receiving cross-sex hormones and the results.

In a press release, Brecheen said lawmakers are committed to holding those responsible for the loss of life accountable.

"It is sickening that the federal government is preying on young people and using our taxpayer dollars to advance its radical gender ideology," Brecheen said.

80%

Budd called the NIH-funded study “highly questionable experiments.”

“Taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund studies that encourage gender transition interventions on young people,” Budd said.



Josh Brecheen elected as Oklahoma Congressman. (Courtesy of Brecheen for Congress)

Others signing the letter included Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), James Lankford (R-Okla.), Mike Lee (R-Utah), and Reps. Mary Miller (R-Ill.), Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.), Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.), Eli Crane (R-Ariz.), Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), Randy Weber (R-Texas), Chip Roy (R-Texas), Ronny Jackson (R-Texas), and Michael Cloud (R-Texas).

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