“A time of anticipation”
Waiting for transition in the UK

We anticipate misgendering, perplexed looks, ignorance, transphobia. Even when what we anticipate does not occur (yet), we act as if it has. [...] I think it has something to do with waiting lists [...] We are kept in a constant state of anticipation: waiting for a letter or phonecall from the GIC, a prescription, a surgery date...

Key Idea
“Anticipation” describes transitioning patients’ engagement with their possible futures. This is mediated by both gender identity services and trans community discourse, and shapes patient expectations, demands, hopes, and fears.

Anticipatory Discourses
- Transitioning patients frequently seek advice and support from internet communities during wait
- Anticipation emerges collectively through shared stories/experiences of medical practice
- Mistrust of practitioners is common, due to:
  - Patients’ own experiences of transphobia/cisgenderism at GICs
  - Stories (sometimes outdated) of transphobia/cisgenderism at GICs
  - Time in which to anticipate transphobia/cisgenderism at GICs
  - GIC protocols seen as outdated/inconsistent
- GIC assessments regarded as a “test” that patients must “pass”
- Private treatment or self-medication often seen as preferable to public health GIC route

Research Methods
- Internet ethnography, qualitative data
- Longitudinal: 2010-2016
- Data collected from:
  - Web forums, Facebook groups, Twitter
  - Blogs and media articles
  - Public health guidance/consulations
  - Protocol and protocol documents
  - Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) websites
- Results coded in NVivo
- Thematic discourse analysis

GIC Waiting Times
Average wait to initial adult appointment:
- 42 weeks (UK mean)
- 87 weeks (longest wait: Leeds)
- 13 weeks (shortest wait: Belfast)

(UK Trans Info FOI request, 2015)

Lengthy assessment period for patients in system:
- Waits of up to six months between appointments
- Real Life Experience typically two years
- Some GICs “start” RLE after initial appointments

We are used to waiting, orientated towards the future like iron filings lining themselves up towards a magnet.”

(Jess Bradley and Francis Myerscough, Action For Trans Health)

TransDocFail
Anon
transdeadfall hiding anxiety and self harm from clinic doctors because I dont feel safe telling them about it.

Kat Gupta
Have an appointment with local GIC next month. Not sure either of us see the point because non-binary treatment isn’t funded

Phoebe Queen
To prove commitment to transitioned life, you usually need an official full time occupation. Unfortunately I was a lft carer

"[P]eople tweeted that [gender clinicians] have too much power [...] both medically and legally. Older trans gender people also wrote [about] their mistreatment in the past, creating ongoing fear."


"I try my best to simply laugh at it all and focus on a few years down the road when everything is sorted and I’m able to get on with being a ‘regular’ guy."

(Participant: James)