

<b>Institution:</b> University of Lincoln		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 - History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Science, Sexuality and Hormones in the Contemporary World		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> Sep 15 to date		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  BECCALOSSO Chiara	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Associate Professor	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>  1 Sep 15 to date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> Sep 15 to date		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) Chiara Beccalossi has employed her historical research to co-produce a new international touring exhibition and public engagement programme on the use of and attitudes towards hormone treatments, which in turn has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generated changes in the international public understanding</b> of the gender and sexual politics behind the development of hormone treatments (HT).</li> <li>• <b>Created space for debate and challenged negative stereotypes through broadened media presence</b>, disrupting current negative narratives about the use of hormones among women and LGBT+ people, combatting sexism and transphobia.</li> <li>• <b>Improved inclusivity and the diversity of practices among art galleries and cultural centres</b> in England, Italy and Spain.</li> <li>• <b>Improved LGBT+ organisations' social inclusion through international public engagement</b>, offering innovative ways for LGBT+ organisations to engage with the public.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) The medical manipulation of so-called 'sex hormones' started at the beginning of the twentieth century, when hormone treatments became pivotal in the management of reproduction, the development of techniques for the normalisation of the body, and for producing the contemporary classification of gender into two distinct and opposite forms of masculinity and femininity. Current debates focus on the period after WWII and stress that people have increasingly demanded hormones as a way to control their fertility, self-determine their bodies and enhance their lives. However, this research does not address the often politically motivated reasons hormone treatments were historically used, or the ways in which they were forcibly administered as a way to promote governments' eugenic demographic policies, repress sexual minorities and normalise people's bodies. Beccalossi's research explores the historical uses of hormone treatments in different countries across the world and, in doing so, sheds light on the medicalisation of sexuality and gender identity in a transnational context, both historically and today.</p> <p>Supported by a 5-year Wellcome Trust research grant (grant 1, see section 3), Beccalossi launched a research programme on the history of hormone treatment in 2015, consisting of extensive archival research in Argentina, Brazil, Italy and Spain. By looking at the archives of medical centres, governments and those held by the families of leading endocrinologists, Beccalossi was able to demonstrate that, since their inception, hormone treatments were used as eugenic tools to physically improve populations, especially in Catholic countries in Southern</p>		

Europe and Latin America. In Argentina, Brazil, Italy and Spain, authoritarian governments set up medical institutes in the 1920s and 1930s to enhance the 'Latin' race. They rejected methods such as sterilisation and euthanasia, instead administering new hormone treatments, not only to treat infertility and sexual impotence, but also to standardise men's and women's bodies, gender identities and even sexual instincts. Among other things, the research showed that hormone treatments were employed to repress homosexuality and to normalise the bodies of people with intersex variations, reinforcing binary categories (3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4;3,5). All this was in line with various Fascist regimes' aims to enlarge and strengthen populations.

A key element of this project included working with a wide range of stakeholders at different stages of the research. Beccalossi's initial historical research was used to develop an open call for artworks, which resulted in the co-production of a new collective exhibition. She also worked with LGBT+ organisations, cultural centres, and art galleries to co-organise a public engagement programme to raise awareness of the little-known history of hormones (grant 2, see section 3). As the archival research developed, these stakeholders helped to shape the research goals and questions.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 'Italian sexology, Nicola Pende's biotypology and hormone treatments in the 1920s', *Histoire, Médecine et Santé* (2017)12: 73-98  
<https://doi.org/10.4000/hms.1173>
- 3.2 'Optimising and normalising the population through hormone therapies in Italian science, c. 1926 – 1950', *The British Journal of the History of Science* (2020) 53(1): 67–88, 2020.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007087419000906>
- 3.3 'Latin Eugenics and Sexual Knowledge in Italy, Spain and Argentina: International Networks across the Atlantic, 1916-46' in D. Haynes, V. Fuechtner and R. Jones (eds), *A Global History of Sexual Science, 1880-1950* (University of California Press, 2017), 304-329.  
Available on request.
- 3.4 'Types, Norms and Normalization: Hormone Research and Treatments in Italy, Argentina and Brazil, c. 1900-1950', *History of the Human Sciences*, 2020  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695120941193>
- 3.5 *Transitional States: Hormones at the Crossroads of Art and Science* (CPS, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, 2018)  
<http://transitionalstates.com/catalogue/>
- 3.6 *Transitional States: Hormones at the Crossroads of Art and Science*, International video art exhibition: Project Space Plus (Lincoln); Peltz Gallery (London); Centre Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB, Barcelona); LABS Gallery Arte Contemporanea (Bologna); Cavò (Trieste)  
Available on request.

Grant 1: Wellcome Trust, University Award 2015-2020 (£255,182.80), 'Sexology, Hormones and Medical Experiments in the Latin Atlantic World: Local Power and International Networks, 1918-1985.

Grant 2: Wellcome Trust, Public Engagement Grant 2016-2020 (£54,506), 'Transitional States: Hormones at the Crossroads of Art and Science.'

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Beccalossi's research demonstrates how an understanding of the historical uses of hormone treatments can inform contemporary attitudes to gender identity, the human body and sexual desires. A key output of Beccalossi's Wellcome Trust-funded research has been the co-

production of a new collective exhibition and public engagement programme on hormone treatments called 'Transitional States: Hormones at the Crossroads of Art and Science' (grant 2, see section 3). Using the early stages of her archival research to inform an open call for collaborators, Beccalossi worked with fourteen artists and collectives from around the world to explore and demonstrate how hormone treatments have medicalised, repressed and enhanced the human body, gender identities and sexual desires. The exhibition was hosted by Project Space Plus (Lincoln), Peltz Gallery (London), the influential CCCB (Barcelona), LABS Gallery Arte Contemporanea (Bologna) and Cavò (Trieste), which enabled artists to reach new audiences as these galleries do not focus on LGBT+ and/or feminist issues (5.3). Public discussions in each city accompanied the exhibition and raised awareness about hormone uses from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. In addition to Beccalossi's participation, public discussions involved LGBT+ activists and organisations, feminists, cultural centres, and gender clinics. Providing historically based understandings of HT and increasing the public's knowledge of the twentieth-century politics behind HT, Beccalossi's research generated cultural, social and wellbeing benefits in four main areas.

#### **Changes in public understanding:**

One of the most significant benefits of Beccalossi's research is how it has started to shape public attitudes and inform discussion about marginalised communities and HT. Approximately 7,100 people attended the exhibition (c.1,000 in Lincoln; 1,944 in London; 3,468 in Barcelona; c.400 in Bologna; and c.400 in Trieste), with high school students a key audience in Barcelona. Almost 11,500 people participated in the public discussions in the five cities. (5.3; 5.4) The Barcelona programme was included in the City's biennial cultural festival, Festival de Pensamiento. Twelve events were filmed and are available online in Catalan, English, Italian or Spanish to ensure longevity and broaden impact. By 31 December 2020, these had attracted 15,807 unique views (5.2). These are in addition to the 11,524 unique website visitors, which extended the programme's global audience to more than 120 countries, including nations where LGBT+ people face persecution, such as Pakistan, the UAE, Malaysia and Egypt. (5.2)

Exhibition and event attendees' comments testified to the profound contemporary significance of the history of HT and highlighted the importance of the exhibition in challenging transphobia. A poignant example of the benefits was given by one female attendee at a public discussion:

*"Since my son told me he was a girl, I have struggled. I didn't know what to do – or even if I could believe it. We definitely haven't had the best relationship since then but when he asked me to come see this exhibition, I couldn't say no. I am still not sure I understand, but I am definitely trying harder and can see that taking this first step has definitely helped us both. Thank you – you've made my job as a mother a little bit easier today."* (5.2)

#### **Created space for debate and challenged negative stereotypes through broadened media presence:**

Beccalossi's work reached beyond those who attended the exhibition and debates through extensive media coverage, broadening public awareness of LGBT+ people's human rights. Beccalossi's research appeared on the internationally syndicated BBC World Service in July 2017 (5.1).

Beccalossi's work has received wide coverage across broadcast, print and digital media in the UK, Italy and Spain, including national newspapers such as *La Repubblica* (Italy) and *El Pais* (Spain), Barcelona's *Time Out* weekly magazine, and Italy's *MSN News* network (5.1). This coverage highlighted how Beccalossi's work created a space to consider problems trans people face in contemporary society, increased understanding of gender, and challenged transphobia. The UK's *Independent* wrote that Beccalossi's work 'created a space which encourages society to explore people's relationship with hormones and HT, particularly for those who are trans.' After covering the exhibition, the *Independent* also launched an enquiry among trans people about their experiences of hormone use. (5.1) In Spain, *Canal 3* featured *Transitional States* on a TV programme exploring trans issues, specifically as part of discussions about hormone use, and promoted its educational function (5.1). Italy's *Gay News* highlighted how Beccalossi

'brought a topic generally confined to experts to the public in an original way and made it accessible to everybody, increasing awareness about the uses of hormones.' (5.1)

*TransMediaWatch Italia* noted that Beccalossi's work 'raised crucial issues on how society influences and regulates gender identity and examines closely the way in which medical progress has conditioned our life.' (5.1)

#### **Improved inclusivity and diversity of practices of art galleries and cultural centres:**

Beccalossi's work helped art galleries and cultural centres understand current concerns about HT and adapt their public programmes and activities to address preconceptions and be more inclusive. Some art galleries, such as the LABS in Bologna, had never engaged with LGBT+ issues before collaborating with Beccalossi, and 'have changed [their] practices' to continue working with the LGBT+ community as they now recognise the social value. (5.4) Other art galleries and cultural centres such as the CCCB have since 'broaden[ed]' their 'programme to include trans, trans-feminist, and non-binary issues' because of Beccalossi's research. Beccalossi's work specifically allowed them 'to broaden the[ir] reach (...), deliver important messages to a wide audience' and 'contributed' to their 'objective of catering to the needs of new audiences and local communities.' Transitional States in Barcelona attracted high school classes, which contributed to the CCCB's aim 'to develop education programmes to dissolve existing gaps.' While the CCCB has 'a history of working with the LGBT+ community', Beccalossi's work helped them 'engage directly with the wider trans community, which has opened possibilities for collaboration not previously possible. Transitional States' success has also created an appetite in Barcelona for [public] discussions about trans issues and this has ensured' their 'commitment to undertake more work with the LGBT+ community' (5.4). The global network, INvolve, recognised the multinational impact the Transitional States programme achieved in the countries it visited when it included Beccalossi on its annual OUTstanding Top 100 LGBT+ Future Leaders list (supported by Yahoo! Finance) as a champion of inclusion. (5.5)

Beccalossi produced a catalogue (3.5) that offers an overview of the artworks contained in the exhibition and provided psychologists, sociologists, historians, journalists, and trans activists the opportunity to reflect on hormone use by exploring the medicalisation of LGBT+ people and women. All 800 hard copies were distributed at the exhibitions and the catalogue is available for free online.

#### **Improved LGBT+ organisations' public engagement and social inclusion:**

Beccalossi's historical insights offered LGBT+ organisations, activists and artists alternative approaches to challenge negative stereotypes and social stigma, thereby empowering and benefitting marginalised groups and their well-being. One notable example is MIT, the most important trans organisation in Italy, which said Beccalossi's work 'empowered young members of the trans community in particular'. Beccalossi also enabled LGBT+ groups 'to reach a wider audience, helping to change perceptions of trans people and fight discrimination.' MIT emphasised that Beccalossi's work 'has facilitated new networks, increased the number of transgender allies, and helped' trans organisations 'fulfil' their 'goals of supporting the trans community and raising awareness of trans issues in society.' MIT clearly recognised the positive impact Beccalossi's work had on the 'wellbeing of the local trans community' (5.3). The art gallery LABS, which worked with Beccalossi and MIT in Bologna, stated: 'Beccalossi has made a powerful contribution to address LGBT+ discrimination'. (5.4) Interviewed by Fummetologica, the French-Italian trans graphic artist, Nicos Balboa, said they were so empowered by the Transitional States exhibition in Bologna that they started a new graphic novel, 'Play with Fire' (2020), about their transition (5.3).

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 **Selected media coverage.** Including: BBC World Service, The History Hour, 'When Homosexuality was a Crime', 29 July 2017; 'All that was wrong with me was a bit of chemistry and a boring wardrobe', *Independent*, 18 May 2018; Susan Stryker, professor of LGBTI studies: "We're all a bit trans"., *El Pais*, 28 April 2019; etc.

- 5.2 **Selected social media and exhibition feedback.** Including: Transitional States website, Facebook Page, Twitter, Vimeo, YouTube account and selected exhibition feedback.
- 5.3 **Testimonials from artists, the trans community, and organisations.** From: Trans Activists/Artists; Movimento Identità Trans (MIT – an Italian Trans Organisation); and Nicoz Balboa's interview on *Fumettologica*.
- 5.4 **Testimonials from Galleries that hosted the Transitional States Exhibition.** Including from: Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB), Barcelona; PELTZ Gallery, London; LABS Gallery Arte Contemporanea, Bologna and Cizerouno Associazione Culturale Cavò Gallery, Trieste.
- 5.5 **Outstanding INvolvemodels, no. 63.**  
<https://outstanding.involverolemodels.org/poll/2020-top-100-lgbt-future-leaders/>