

Dear Dr. Zucker, We Are Not an Experiment

By jen

Published March 8, 2012 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/dear-dr-zucker-we-are-not-an-experiment_n_5668.htm

Abstract

After finally hearing Dr. Zucker's comments on the CBC Radio show I participated in that aired this past Monday, I had to sit and reflect. Dr. Zucker referred to us (parents of gender diverse children and the children themselves) as a "social experiment". That doesn't feel right, at all. He also called us a social movement, [...]

Article

After finally hearing Dr. Zucker's comments on the CBC Radio show I participated in that aired this past Monday, I had to sit and reflect. Dr. Zucker referred to us (parents of gender diverse children and the children themselves) as a "social experiment". That doesn't feel right, at all. He also called us a social movement, and a culture that meets for conferences and such, but that didn't grate on me the same way his reference to a "social experiment" does, and for good reason.

These kids aren't lab rats. His accusation insinuates that we (parents and supportive physicians) are "dosing" our kids (with hormone blockers and hormones) the same sterile way a clinical researcher would administer drugs to a helpless lab animal and then sit back, take notes and see what happens. If this test fails, no problem. Move on to the next insignificant test trial, right? Wrong.

These are our lives, not experiments. Not meaningless little tests. Our parents aren't the "Let's inject them and see what happens!" type of folks either. Our children's lives aren't things we take lightly. We labor over every single decision. We lose sleep. We lose our friends and families. We listen to our kids beg not to go through the wrong puberty. We hear them crying at night in their beds after they have a nightmare about waking up as the wrong person. We die inside when we see our children struggle with having a body that doesn't match their brain. We break our hearts (and our banks) to make sure our children can grow as healthy, safe and happy individuals. None of these decisions are made with a cold, detached motivation like an experiment. I find it incredibly insensitive to even suggest it, especially from someone who suggests they try to "help" families like ours.

Dr. Zucker intimated that some "boys" (aka assigned the male gender at birth based on sex organs) just see the color pink and think, "I'm a girl if I like pink!" when in fact he knows that it's never that simple. It's not just the dress, or the color, or the clothes. It's the child's deep identification with who they are, not what society traditionally refers to as "boy" or "girl". In my opinion he consistently blurred the lines between gender identity and gender expression and as an "expert" he shouldn't have as it confuses, not educates the listeners.

I wonder if any of the families who went to Dr. Zucker for help with gender identity would like to talk

with me about their child's sense of well-being afterward. What about his so-called 85% of kids who "changed their mind" and "wanted to live" in the gender assigned at birth? Did his strict and rigid reparative therapy produce happy, healthy, fully functioning individuals? How many of his patients went off the grid (and weren't counted in his stats) because they were damaged by his methods and went on to identify in a way that didn't fit the outcome of his own little experiment? How many of his patients killed themselves?

I envision a world with 100% healthy, safe and happy individuals. That's not an experiment, that's a feeling in my heart. I'm not a subculture of the population. I'm a mom. I'm not calling for a social movement. I'm encouraging everyone to have loving compassion for one another as we all stand in our truth whatever that looks like.

This is not a test. This is real life.

cross-posted from Today You Are You

Suggested citation

jen. "Dear Dr. Zucker, We Are Not an Experiment." TransAdvocate, March 8, 2012.
https://www.transadvocate.com/dear-dr-zucker-we-are-not-an-experiment_n_5668.htm