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Title: Transitioning the Health Care System to Effectively Work with Older Transgender Persons

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In August, 1862, a teenaged Irish immigrant named Albert Cashier enlisted in the Union Infantry (1). He served bravely for three years, fighting in 40 battles, even raising the country's flag over land previously held by the Confederates. After the war, he worked as a laborer and eventually drew a military pension. He lived alone and never married. At the age of 71, he developed dementia, and moved to the Quincy Illinois Soldiers' Home. The medical staff there discovered that Albert was a woman. Although, he had lived his entire adult life as a man, during the last year of his life, the staff at the asylum to which he was committed forced him to wear a skirt until his death. As many as 400 women similarly enlisted as men and served in the military during the Civil War (2). Women were not allowed to enlist.

American society has changed since the American Civil War. However, transgender individuals in our society continue to experience health care disparities, stigma, and discrimination, even in a health care system that is supposed to provide compassionate and quality care. In the article, *Gay and Gray Session: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Transgender Aging*, Johnson et al, have written an outstanding guide to enhance our understanding of and compassion for transgender individuals, who as the Cashier case illustrates, unfortunately experience a great deal of stigma and discrimination, even in the healthcare system.

The article begins with a demographic overview of the transgender community in the United States. Approximately 700,000 Americans self-identify as transgender, with nearly a third aged older than 65 years. The authors offer definitions of the large, and for many of us, new vocabulary that is relevant for working with members of this community. They include a discussion of the importance of inquiring about not only gender identity, but also gender expression. Additionally, there is an important review of the concept of intersectionality. This concept describes the multifactorial contributors to discrimination and social stigma that occur when an individual is a member of more than one at-risk group.

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