

Athletic boost? A year after starting hormone treatments, transgender women still have an advantage over cisgender peers

A new study suggests transgender women maintain an athletic advantage over their cisgender peers even after a year on hormone therapy.

The results, published [November 6] in the [British Journal of Sports Medicine](#), could mean the current one-year waiting period for Olympic athletes who are transitioning is inadequate.

“For the Olympic level, the elite level, I’d say probably two years is more realistic than one year,” said the study’s lead author, Dr. Timothy Roberts, a pediatrician and the director of the adolescent medicine training program at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. “At one year, the trans women on average still have an advantage over the cis women,” he said, referring to cisgender, or nontransgender, women.

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[Medical physicist and transgender runner Joanna] Harper, who was a consultant on the IOC’s current recommendations, said the real takeaway from Roberts’ study is that transgender women ultimately do reach parity with cis women in athletic tasks. She, however, doesn’t think Roberts’ findings mean sporting organizations need to require two years of testosterone suppression before trans women can compete against cisgender women.

“It’s not necessary for all advantages to be removed,” she said. “All that is necessary is for trans women to perform more like cisgender women than like cisgender men.”

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