Recording Gender Identity and Pronouns in Best Practice and Medical Director Software

Capturing gender identity information in clinical software is now more straightforward, with new fields available in Best Practice and Medical Director to support a more inclusive and holistic approach to patient care.

In addition to recording sex assigned at birth, you can now document a patient's **gender identity** and **pronouns**. Accurately recording this information improves clinical care, enhances doctor/patient relationships and reflects a holistic approach to patient care. For example, it is vital to ensuring appropriate care for transgender patients. In addition, this information can be included in My Health Record and can be shared with others providing care to the patient.

This data can also be shared via My Health Record and with other healthcare providers involved in the patient's care.

Why It Matters

Recording gender identity and pronouns is vital for both clinical and social reasons. For example, a male patient who was assigned female at birth may still require screening for conditions such as cervical cancer. If this detail is missing or recorded inaccurately, they may not receive appropriate care.

Accurate demographic data also supports:

- Better oversight regarding needs of gender diverse populations

- More accurate auditing and reporting options

- Alignment with the RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th edition)

"*Missing or misrepresented information in a patient's health record can have substantial implications for clinical care delivery.*

For example, a male patient whose sex assigned at birth is female may still require routine screening for cervical or breast cancer. If this information is not correctly recorded, they may be excluded from recall systems or not offered necessary screening, increasing their health risks.

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Conversely, a female patient whose sex assigned at birth is male may be unnecessarily invited to undergo screenings that are not clinically relevant, which can cause distress and confusion. Clear and accurate documentation of both sex assigned at birth and current gender identity ensures that patients receive the right care at the right time, without assumptions or oversights.

Your practice needs to explain the reason for collecting this information to patients, so they understand that the data is being collected confidentially and solely to improve their health outcomes—not for discriminatory or judgemental purposes."

— RACGP Standards for general practices (5th edition)

How to Ask Patients for This Information

We understand practice staff may sometimes feel uncertain about how to ask patients for details like gender identity or pronouns. These conversations can be approached with sensitivity and respect:

- Use a written form to give patients the opportunity to provide this information privately.

- Explain why you're asking: e.g., "This information helps us to provide you with the most appropriate and inclusive care."

- Include open-ended options so patients can describe their identity in their own words.

Following international best practice, the recommended approach involves a two-step question:

1. What sex were you assigned at birth?

2. What is your current gender identity?
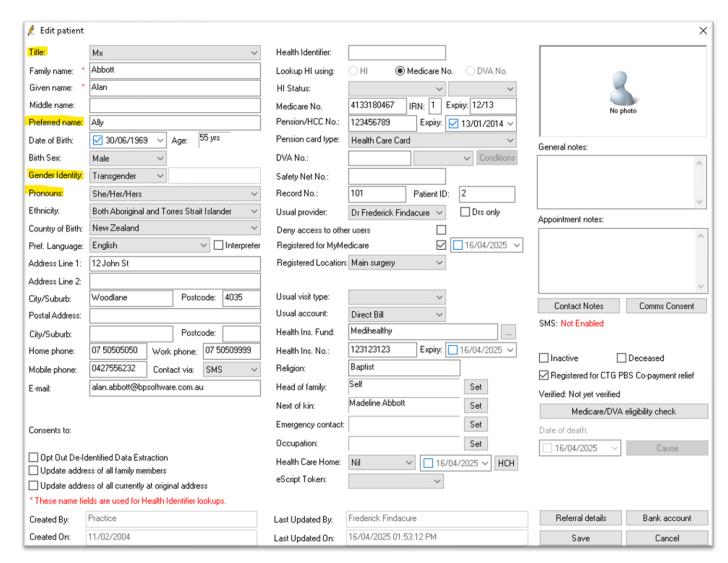
Need More Support?

If you're unsure how to approach these conversations, refer to the RACGP fact sheet on collecting and recording information about patient sex, gender, pronouns, variations of sex characteristics, and sexual orientation. It includes tested, inclusive question and answer options and guidance on how to integrate these into your practice.

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Best Practice

1. In a Patient file, press Open > Demographics (F10) to open the 'Edit patient' window.
2. Fill in **Gender Identity** field (dropdown with free text option) and the patient's **Pronouns** (dropdown*).
3. Check that the **Title** and **Preferred name** is still suitable considering any changes or updates to the other fields.
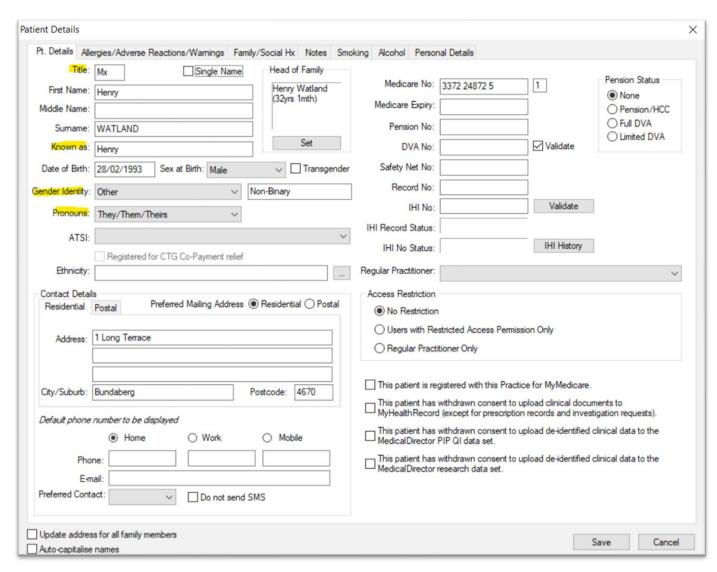

*Since currently the **Pronouns** field in BP is limited to selection from a pre-filled drop-down, this may require use of General notes if Pronouns don't align with listed options.

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Medical Director

- Open the Patient Details window by double clicking on a patient record field.
- Fill in **Gender Identity** field (dropdown and with free text option) and the patient's **Pronouns** (dropdown*).
- Check that the **Title** and **Preferred name** is still suitable considering any changes or updates to the other fields.

*Since currently **Pronouns** field in BP is limited to selection from a pre-filled drop-down, this may require use of notes if a patient's pronouns don't align with listed options.

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