

## Kyle Knight

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**From:** Kyle Knight  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 11, 2021 8:59 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Human Rights Watch request for comment

Dr. Poppas,

As you may be aware, there was a protest last weekend, July 7<sup>th</sup>, outside Weill-Cornell hospital, calling attention to the practice of medically unnecessary surgeries on children born with intersex traits/Differences of Sex Development (DSD). While Human Rights Watch did not participate in the demonstration, we are preparing a statement to publish regarding the harmful human rights impacts of the surgeries the protesters were highlighting, including surgeries you perform to alter the size of children's clitorises.

As you may recall, we met and discussed this matter in May 2017. Our [follow up correspondence](#) and [your reply to us](#) were published in a report Human Rights Watch published in July 2017.

In our statement, we plan to discuss operations to reduce the size of the clitoris for cosmetic reasons, noting that they carry the risk of pain, nerve damage, and scarring. We also plan to mention that in 2007, as chief of pediatric urology at Weill Cornell, you published a [medical journal article](#) that attempted to disprove claims of nerve damage from his clitoral surgeries by touching the genitals of girls you had operated on with a "vibratory device" and querying what they felt. As you will recall, ethicists [called you out at the time](#), and you [told Human Rights Watch](#) that you had stopped that research in 2006. Nonetheless, we plan to mention that you continue to conduct the operations and [contribute to research](#) on surgical outcomes.

Please let me know if you have any comments on the above, or if you have any updates regarding your practice of these surgeries. We may publish your responses at our discretion and when appropriate, either in full or in part.

Regards,

-Kyle

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**Kyle Knight**

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The logo for Human Rights Watch, consisting of the words "HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH" in white, all-caps, sans-serif font, stacked vertically on a blue rectangular background.