

UBC project examines the LGBT experience with breast and gynecological cancers

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Researchers at the University of British Columbia are leading the first nationwide project on how sexual and gender minorities experience cancer, highlighting previously overlooked communities' perspectives on cancer care.

Led by Prof. Mary Bryson, Director of the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, and funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the three-year Cancer's Margins project will look at how lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender cancer patients and members of their support networks in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia experience breast and gynecological cancers from [screening](#) and diagnosis to care, treatment and support networks.

Researchers want to understand what individuals value about their care and support networks, how they educate themselves, and what they consider culturally competent care.

"People try to look for health information in communities that reflect themselves," said Bryson, also a professor in the Faculty of Education.

"We've found that these groups don't have access to cancer health care, or cancer support communities that map onto their own support networks and community values."

According to Statistics Canada, [LGBT](#) people are less likely to have a general practitioner and therefore to participate in cancer screening.

Canadian GP's typically have little or no knowledge of the cancer risks these populations face.

According to Bryson, the LGBT experience with breast and gynecological cancers is unique in that typical cancer screening initiatives, cancer treatment and support protocols don't anticipate the inclusion of sexual [minorities](#).

“A transgender man may still be at risk for developing gynecologic cancers but he may not be participating in regular screening because none of the health promotions and awareness material is directed at him and his GP may be unaware of his risk.”

For more information, visit the [Cancer's Margins](#) website at: www.queercancer.org

Provided by University of British Columbia

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