



Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Divisional Seminar

Monday, May 16, 2016, 1pm – 2pm, Room HS 208
Health Sciences Building, 155 College Street, Toronto

Lori Ross, Associate Professor, DLSPH:

Complicating non-monosexuality: A mixed methods study of mental health among pregnant sexual minority women

Abstract: There is ample population-based data to indicate that sexual minority women are at elevated risk for poor health outcomes, relative to heterosexual women. However, recent data suggest that the risk is not uniformly elevated for all sexual minority women. In particular, women who identify as 'bisexual' or 'mostly heterosexual' in population-based surveys tend to have the highest risk for poor health outcomes, particularly in relation to mental and sexual health. However, little is known about why these women in particular are at elevated risk, or what they mean by their use of these specific identity labels. In this analysis, we aim to address this research gap by drawing from a mixed methods study of 96 pregnant women classified into three sexual orientation categories: heterosexual women, visible sexual minority women (i.e., women partnered with women) and invisible sexual minority (ISM) women (i.e., women partnered with men but with sexual histories including women). Using a sequential exploratory mixed methods design, our goals are to a) characterize the diversity of identities and experiences within non-monosexual categories; and b) determine which elements of non-monosexual experience are associated with poor mental health outcomes. We hope that this analysis will shed light on the elements of bisexual experience, broadly defined, that may have particularly significant implications for women's health.

Short bio: Lori Ross is an Associate Professor in the Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Division of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, having joined the Division as a core faculty member in May 2015. Prior to that, she was a Scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) for over 10 years. Lori uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in her research work, with a strong focus on integrating the principles of community-based research. Much of her research focuses on understanding the mental health and service needs of marginalized populations including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) people, in order to improve access to services for these communities.

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Corey Flanders, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health:

Young Queer Women's Use of the Internet and Digital Technology for Sexual Health Information Seeking

Abstract: While research indicates sexual minority youth overall prefer using the Internet to find sexual health information compared to in-person services, we know little about the online sexual health information seeking practices specific to young queer women. This exploratory qualitative study employed a series of focus groups to understand more about what types of online resources young queer women access, their motivations for using those resources, and what types of sexual health information they gather from the resources they access. The focus group data were analyzed from a constructivist grounded theory approach. Results indicate that participants used a wide range of online resources, such as apps, websites, blogs, and YouTube. The type of resource accessed often depended upon the information need. Participants reported preferring online resources due to experience or expectation of heteronormativity from their sexual health service providers, convenience and accessibility, the capacity to remain anonymous, and the lack of relevant sexual health information offline. Implications for the development of effective online sexual health information resources targeting young sexual minority women will be discussed.

Short bio: Corey Flanders is a postdoctoral research fellow with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Her research interests focus on addressing the health inequities experienced by sexual and gender minority people.