Area of Research: Sexual Health and STI Prevention For Sexual Minority Men In Suburban Cities

Description of duties
The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has a mature syphilis epidemic and emerging gonorrhea and Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) epidemics among men who have sex with men (MSM). Interventions targeting these epidemics focus on MSM in Toronto’s urban core and outbreak areas, where infection rates are highest, and have largely ignored MSM living in suburban, exurban, or rural micropolitan areas as part of the epidemic. Our goal is to improve how we address STI epidemics by exploring how suburban MSM navigate their sexual lives and sexual health. Specifically, the objectives of the first phase of our geography of sex project have been to:

1. Explore how suburban MSM connect with social (including cultural, racial, ethnic, religious), sexual, and health service communities, and navigate sexual stigma. This will show us the interrelationship between social, sexual, and health care networks, and impact of intersectional stigma on the structure and dynamics of these networks.
2. Explore the sexual health care practices and preferences of suburban MSM. This will tell us how suburban MSM take care of themselves (or not), where they access sexual health services, and how to improve local access and services.
3. Expand STI transmission theory beyond urban environments and contexts to include suburban, exurban and rural environments, contexts and dynamics.
4. Develop recommendations that improve sexual health care serving suburban MSM.

Phase 1 of this project has involved 44 in-depth interviews with MSM who live, work or socialize in Peel Region (Brampton, Mississauga, Caledon). Participants were asked about their social connections, sexual health, health care seeking behaviours, and activity space. These in-depth interviews need to be further analyzed and the findings need to be written for publication and otherwise communicated widely. The results should be used to inform the next phase (phase 2) of the project, which will be developed in partnership with Moyo health and community services and in consultation with community stakeholders. Phase 2 should include documentation and analysis of egocentric networks to explore the movement and mixing patterns of MSM between
urban, suburban, exurban and rural environments. It is possible to expand the study population for phase 2 beyond MSM.

Working closely with Dr. Gesink, as well as Moyo Health and Community Services, the successful candidate will take a lead role in the project.

**Salary: $65,000 per year + benefits**

*Please note that should the minimum rates stipulated in the collective agreement fall below the rates stated in this posting, the minimum rates stated in the collective agreement shall prevail.*

**Required qualifications:**

- PhD obtained within previous 3 years in epidemiology, social and behavioural health science, health services, medical geography, or related field.
- Experience and comfort in sexual health research, and ideally with LGBTQ+ populations.
- The ideal candidate will have training and experience in mixed methods; however, candidates with expertise in qualitative or quantitative methods and keen interest and aptitude for learning mixed methods, including buttressing their knowledge of alternate methods will be considered.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Interest in interacting with and mentoring junior trainees, as well as interacting with the broader research team and community.
- High level of enthusiasm, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team and using a community-based research approach.
- Evidence of a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and the promotion of a respectful and collegial, comfortable, and safe learning and working environment
- Canadian citizenship or permanent residency.

**Application instructions**

All individuals interested in this position must submit to Dr. Dionne Gesink (dionne.gesink@utoronto.ca) by the closing date:

- Cover letter
- CV
- Publication or other writing sample
- Sample of other type of research communication

**Closing date:** August 20, 2023

**Supervisor:** Dionne Gesink

**Expected start date:** September 5, 2023

**Term:** 1 year, possibility of extension

**FTE:**
The normal hours of work are 40 hours per week for a full-time postdoctoral fellow (prorated for those holding a partial appointment) recognizing that the needs of the employee’s research and training and the needs of the supervisor’s research program may require flexibility in the performance of the employee’s duties and hours of work. Some evening or weekend work may be required.

*Employment as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto is covered by the terms of the CUPE 3902 Unit 5 Collective Agreement.*

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*The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from racialized persons / persons of colour, women, Indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.*