

A4 - Paper Presentations: Eating Disorders and Diverse Populations

A4a: Eating Disorder Risk and Psychological Distress, Health Service Access and Diagnosis Among Intersectional Minority Groups

Although eating disorders (EDs) affect people across diverse identities and socioeconomic statuses, research and treatment continue to centre cisgender, White, heterosexual women. Guided by intersectionality theory, we aim to examine how intersectionality affects psychological distress, healthcare access, and ED diagnosis among individuals with a high versus low risk of disordered eating.

Using data from Poll 22 (n=8,211) of the Mental Health Research Canada Polling Study, we apply intersectional multilevel analysis of individual heterogeneity and discriminatory accuracy (I-MAIHDA) to estimate inequalities across cross-classified strata of gender/sexual identity, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. We use random-intercept multilevel linear and logistic regression models to assess associations between disordered eating risk and psychological distress, healthcare access, and ED diagnosis while adjusting for covariates.

Findings (anticipated in December 2025) will illustrate how the intersection of multiple marginalized identities may result in disparities beyond what is captured in isolated analyses of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status alone.

Presenters: Andrew Fullerton and Niyati Misty

A4b: Exploring LGBTQ+ Disparities in Eating Disorder Care

This multi-phased community-informed research project aims to identify factors that facilitate or hinder treatment and recovery processes for LGBTQ+ Canadians, and explore current understandings and practices of healthcare providers in delivering LGBTQ+-centered eating disorder (ED) care. Phase one was a pilot study with semi structured interviews conducted with LGBTQ+ individuals in Canada who sought ED care. Community partners advised on recruitment, questions, and priorities. Data were analyzed using Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine how discourses regulate LGBTQ+ identities, bodies, and care practices. Findings were translated into draft training materials and shared back to community partners to identify next steps. The pilot clarified practices that promote cultural safety, and generated concrete recommendations for training content. Community feedback affirmed the value of arts informed formats and pointed to specific scenarios and language that providers need to practice. Based on the pilot, we are launching an expanded study that adds licensed healthcare providers as participants to compare perspectives and refine the toolkit. Planned outputs include an evidence-informed, arts-informed toolkit for practice, along with policy and education recommendations.

Presenters: Phillip Joy and Megan Henderson

A4c: Intersectional Eating Disorder Experiences of Gender-Diverse Asian Canadians: An Arts-Based Narrative Study

Eating disorders (EDs) are often stereotyped as afflicting White cisgender girls, a narrative that obscures the experiences of racialized and gender-diverse people and contributes to disparities in ED (self-)recognition and care. This arts-based narrative study stories the ED experiences of four gender-diverse Asian Canadians living in Greater Vancouver. Interviews and body mapping generate verbal and artistic stories that elicit how the participants' identities and social contexts shape their relationships with food, eating, and body image. Body mapping, an arts-based method engaging the body as a storyteller, offers embodied insights and a nuanced mode of knowledge translation. Guided by the Theory of Intersectionality, forthcoming critical narrative analysis will explore how ethnicity and gender intersect to give meaning to the participants' ED stories. By centering gender-diverse Asian Canadian voices, this study seeks to advance culturally sensitive and gender-affirming understandings of EDs, ultimately informing efforts toward more equitable ED care in Canada.

Presenter: Clover Lee

A4d: Eating Disorders in Women with and without PCOS

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a complex endocrine-metabolic condition linked to elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and eating disorders (ED). Despite this, screening for ED in PCOS remains limited. We conducted an on-line survey of the prevalence of ED and disordered eating symptoms among 340 females with and without PCOS in Alberta, Canada, using validated tools (EDE-Q and NEQ). Participants with PCOS had significantly higher scores across all EDE-Q subscales and the NEQ. The prevalence of bulimia nervosa, binge ED, and atypical anorexia nervosa were 2-3 fold greater in those with PCOS. Less than 9% of all respondents had ever been screened or received an ED diagnosis. These findings confirm an under-recognition of ED in females, particularly those with PCOS and underscores the need for improved screening and integrated mental health support for those with PCOS.

Presenter: Donna Vine