

Survey explores trans, non-binary population

August 9 2019, by Jason Winders



Epidemiology and Biostatistics professor Greta Bauer expects that nationwide Trans PULSE Canada survey to bridge a massive “deficit of quantitative data across Canada on the health of trans and non-binary people.” Credit: Western News

Researchers hope findings from a new nationwide survey will offer greater insights into trans and non-binary communities where little data currently exist—doing for Canada what a similar survey did for Ontario a decade ago. The findings will inform a near endless string of areas from health care and social services, to public policy and education.

The [Trans PULSE Canada survey](#) is a "voluntary community census" that seeks participants 14 years old or older, who live in Canada, and

have a [gender identity](#) that differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The survey has two versions: a 70-minute long form and a 10-minute short form, explained Greta Bauer, an Epidemiology and Biostatistics professor and academic lead for the [Trans PULSE Project](#).

The survey includes questions on health and well-being; gender-affirming care; access to primary and emergency [health care](#); social support; gender positivity and distress; identity documents; among others.

Other questions specifically target nine priority populations, namely non-binary, living with a disability, Indigenous, rural, sex worker, racialized, immigrant, youth, or elder. That information will be key in informing [public policy](#) and practice, Bauer said, as that data is nearly nonexistent nationwide.

Trans Pulse Canada, a community-based research project in Ontario, is partnering on the survey with Western, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

The current survey grew out of an effort conducted in 2009-10 in Ontario. That was the first large-scale study of its kind. Its success, combined with the current data landscape, led researchers to go larger a decade later.

"We expanded that initial idea across Canada because we still have provinces with essentially no data on trans or non-binary people. None," Bauer said. "Additionally, there are entire subgroups within that community where we have no data. We are really trying to make up for this deficit of quantitative data across Canada on the health of trans and non-binary people."

Although too early to forecast turnout, or predict any results, Bauer

knows whatever data are uncovered will be of great value—because she has seen its power play out already.

"By being the first of its kind, the findings of the Ontario survey really shifted our focus in some ways."

At that time, researchers, health-care professionals and Ontario policy makers were provided with a fuller picture of the trans and non-binary community across a number of areas. For example, "absolutely alarming" numbers related to suicide risks were exposed. Those numbers shifted priorities to addressing issues, including social isolation, feelings of in public, parental support, among other things that contributed to that higher-than-expected suicide risk.

The current nationwide survey will remain open through the end of September.

The earliest findings will be released this fall, with more detailed findings to be rolled out over several years as the expected depth of data gets explored.

More information: The Trans PULSE Canada survey: The Trans PULSE Canada survey

Trans PULSE Project: transpulseproject.ca/

Provided by University of Western Ontario

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