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Joint Federal Research Funding for Military Personnel and Veterans

Project Report Summary Template

Funding Opportunity
Health Research Priorities for Women and Diverse Members in the Canadian Armed Forces: Findings from a Needs Assessment
Brief Overview
This project identified priority health research areas affecting women and trans and gender-diverse (TGD) members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). The study also explored barriers to conducting inclusive research and developed recommendations to support future research, policy development, and service delivery.
What is this Research About? As the CAF becomes increasingly diverse, there is a growing need to better understand the unique health experiences and challenges faced by women and TGD members. This research aimed to identify the most important health topics requiring further study and to determine what barriers may limit the generation and use of evidence to improve health outcomes, readiness, recruitment, and retention.
What did the Research Do? Researchers conducted a needs assessment using a modified Delphi process informed by a rapid literature review. Participants included serving and former CAF members, service providers, and researchers with expertise in military health and equity-deserving populations. Over two rounds of surveys, participants rated the importance of various health topics and identified barriers to inclusive research.
What did the Research Find? Mental health emerged as the highest research priority, particularly PTSD, military sexual trauma, operational stress, burnout, depression, and mental health stigma. Other priority areas included musculoskeletal injuries, toxic and environmental exposures, childcare access, mentorship and career development, institutional trust, and women's health issues such as perimenopause, menopause, fertility, and access to women's health services. Participants also identified significant research barriers, including confidentiality concerns, fragmented data systems, limited demographic data, and challenges conducting longitudinal research within military populations.
What does this Research Mean? The findings provide an evidence-informed roadmap for future health research and policy development related to women and diverse CAF members. The report recommends investing in mental health, injury prevention, toxic exposure research, women's health across the lifespan, childcare, and mentorship initiatives. It also highlights the importance of improving data collection, strengthening equity-informed reporting, engaging people with lived experience, and fostering collaboration among government, academic, and community partners. These efforts can help improve

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health outcomes, operational readiness, retention, and long-term wellbeing for military members and Veterans

Sources

Jenny JW Liu, Erin Collins, Natalie Ein, Anthony Nazarov, and J. Don Richardson. *Health Research Priorities for Women and Diverse Members in the CAF - Findings from a Needs Assessment*. MacDonald Franklin OSI Research Centre, February 2026. Funded through the Joint Federal Research Funding Program for Military Personnel and Veterans.

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