# Better Cancer Screenings ‘Crucial' for Transgender and Gender-Diverse People



Researchers from Canada and Australia have highlighted the need for improved health screenings for transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) individuals to mitigate the risk of undetected cancers. Their work, published in Seminars in Oncology Nursing, calls attention to the barriers faced by TGD individuals, particularly in low-income countries and areas where diversity is criminalized.

Despite comprising a small proportion of the population—estimated between 0.3% and 4.5% of adults—TGD individuals often encounter the same health issues as cis-gendered people, with greater cancer risk due to higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use and sexually transmitted infections. Nurse practitioner Toni Slotnes-O’Brien from the University of South Australia co-authored the paper, emphasizing the need for inclusive healthcare practices.

The paper recommends training nurse practitioners to collaborate with clinicians in providing culturally competent care. This includes knowledge of alternative tests, such as self-collection for cervical screening, and recommending mammograms for transgender women beginning at age 50.

Persistent discrimination leads many TGD individuals to avoid healthcare services, which can result in late cancer diagnoses and poorer health outcomes. The World Professional Association of Transgender Health provides guidelines for practitioners treating TGD individuals on hormone therapy, stressing the importance of considering factors such as hormone dosage and duration of use.

The researchers argue that inclusive healthcare settings, like the UniSA City West Health Clinic, which offers a transgender and gender-diverse clinic and gender-neutral toilets, play a significant role in improving health outcomes for TGD populations.