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Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit



Nisha Marshall
University of Calgary

Project Title:
Setting the Top 10 Research Priorities in Psychedelic-Assisted Cancer Therapy

ABOUT NISHA

Nisha is a Master's student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Calgary. Her research focuses on improving the quality of life and well-being of people living with cancer through innovative and patient-centered approaches, including psychedelic-assisted therapy. Her current work aims to identify the top research priorities in psychedelic-assisted cancer therapy from the perspectives of patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers, helping to ensure that future research addresses the questions and needs that matter most to those directly affected. She also brings research experience in women's health, sexual health, and pain, which informs her interest in developing holistic approaches to supporting health and well-being in people living with cancer.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Forty-two percent of people in Canada will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, and approximately 40% of these cases will be classified as advanced cancer, meaning their cancer is unlikely to be cured. People living with advanced cancer often experience significant psychological and existential distress, including anxiety, depression, fear of death, and loss of meaning. While emerging evidence suggests that psychedelic-assisted cancer therapy (PACT) may help address these challenges, future research is needed. Currently, there is no patient-oriented research agenda to guide future studies, implementation, or policy development in this area. This project will establish the first Canadian

patient-oriented research agenda for PACT using the James Lind Alliance (JLA) Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) methodology. The project will bring together patients, caregivers, clinicians, community support workers, and policymakers to collaboratively identify and prioritize the most important unanswered research questions regarding PACT. Through bilingual national surveys, evidence synthesis, interim prioritization, and a final consensus workshop, the project will produce a "top 10" list of research priorities to guide future work in PACT. A key strength of the project is its commitment to diverse, inclusive, and equitable engagement. Recruitment strategies will intentionally engage underrepresented and equity-deserving populations, including Indigenous, racialized, Francophone, and rural communities, and those with limited technological access. Knowledge mobilization activities will include sharing the final priorities with funding agencies, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, as well as researchers, to help ensure that future PACT research reflects the priorities of people affected by cancer and those who care for them. We will also create public-facing summaries and resources addressing previously answered questions about PACT to improve patient awareness of existing knowledge. The anticipated outcome is a nationally informed, patient-centered research agenda that will support future patient-oriented research, healthcare policy development, and equitable implementation of PACT in Canada.