



McGill

Department of  
Epidemiology, Biostatistics  
and Occupational Health

EPIDEMIOLOGY

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THE DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, BIOSTATISTICS AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, - SEMINAR SERIES IS A SELF-APPROVED GROUP LEARNING ACTIVITY (SECTION 1) AS DEFINED BY THE MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA

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University of Toronto



## *The Social Geography of Sex*

**MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2020 / 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm**  
**Strathcona Anatomy Building**

3640 rue University – Rm M-1

ALL ARE WELCOME

**ABSTRACT:** Sexually transmitted infection (STI) intervention and control has relied heavily on core theory. Core theory posits a core-peripheral sexual network structure, and that targeting resources to the core, whether defined as a group or geographic area, should reduce STI transmission and bring an epidemic under control. Syphilis has been epidemic among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) in Toronto since the early 2000s, and gonorrhea is now emerging as a new epidemic among gbMSM, despite enhanced sexual health resources in Toronto's downtown core area, where syphilis and gonorrhea rates are most elevated. Core theory is no longer sufficient for bringing modern STI epidemics under control. The purpose of this talk is to introduce a new mid-level theory of STI trans-

mission grounded in core theory and expanded based on the findings of an integrated mixed methods study on the social geography of sex conducted with gbMSM who lived, worked, or socialized in Toronto.

### OBJECTIVES

**By the end of this talk, you will be familiar with:**

1. The geographic distribution of STIs as a reflection of the underlying social process of sexual partner selection, including the role of geosocial networking apps;
2. "Convection mixing", an urban-non-urban mixing pattern between sexual partners based on spatial and egocentric sexual network analyses;

3. Theories of STI transmission and theory building.

**BIO:** Dr. Dionne Gesink has built a research program investigating the social epidemiology of sexual health that seeks to better understand the many ways culture and environment shape the patterns of our sexual behaviours and relationships. Dr. Gesink uses novel approaches to navigate the complex connections between physical spaces and the people and communities who inhabit or pass through them, which provides insight into how to improve sexual health outcomes for vulnerable, marginalized, minority groups and the general population. Dr. Gesink is a Professor of Epidemiology with the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Chair of the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto.