

## **Spot the Difference: recognizing risks for cancer in the experiences of normal aging**

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*Introduction:* Endometrial cancer (EC) is one of the few cancers with an increasing incidence, especially among premenopausal females. When detected early, EC patients expect a 5-year survival rate of 95%. However, for 10-20% of patients who experience a recurrence, or are diagnosed at an advanced stage, a much lower 17% survival rate is expected, emphasizing the need for early detection. Symptoms of EC in pre-menopause are often confused with changes associated with reproductive ageing, leading to delayed diagnosis. Furthermore, females face several barriers that may delay diagnosis, such as lack of health literacy, taboo and embarrassment of symptoms, and health care provider bias.

*Objective:* To evaluate participants ability to distinguish between normal aging and causes for concern, and further probe some of the gaps in knowledge around menstruation, early signs of cancer, and delays in accessing care.

*Methods:* In this study, we use qualitative interviews to capture experiences of a diverse group of females who are undergoing menopausal transition, are post-menopausal, or have been diagnosed with EC. We want to be especially inclusive of populations at elevated risk for EC and learn whether knowledge gaps regarding EC risk factors and symptoms are associated with certain patient socio-ethnic characteristics. Gaining insight into the experience of various individuals, from pre-menopausal females to EC survivors, and collaborating with these individuals will allow us to address knowledge gaps and barriers to accessing care for EC.