



## Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance

Knowledge Translation and Mobilization Working Group |

### Member Profile



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Alliance member since 2021

### Biography

I am a Scientific Associate at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (TRI) Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation program in Toronto. I was first introduced to women's heart health during my PhD at McMaster University where I studied the mechanisms contributing to the vascular structure and function changes observed in overweight women during aerobic and resistance activity.

My interest in women's heart health was further peaked when I began my post-doctoral studies at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI). I worked at the UOHI for four years (2015-2019), where I was involved in several projects related to women's heart health. Specifically, one of the research studies I was centrally involved with included the design and implementation of a larger and randomized control trial evaluating peer support in women with heart disease.

During my second post-doctoral fellowship and now as a Scientific Associate at TRI, I am actively involved in a variety of women's specific initiatives and studies. As the Covid-19 pandemic hit, I helped co-develop the Women with Heart Online program, a virtual education platform offering weekly education talks and/or exercise sessions specifically designed for women with heart disease. We are currently evaluating this program using a mixed methods approach with surveys and focus group interviews. I am also working closely with Dr. Colella on a CIHR-funded Planning & Dissemination grant involving a pan-Canadian team, focused on post-partum CVD risk and strategies to better understand gaps in this important area of research.

Finally, I am the project manager of a large-scale study investigating the use of wearable technologies in the cardiac rehab environment in women.

In addition to my research, I have held various leadership positions and am currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (CACPR) where I have worked collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team to organize national level conferences. I also chair the CACPR webinar committee that plans a monthly education series for our membership, in addition to playing a key role in creating CCS accredited advanced training modules for



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cardiac rehabilitation specialists (i.e., CV risk factors, physical activity and exercise, nutrition, behaviour change, medications). During my time at the UOHI, I was a member of the Trainee committee in several roles (Chair (2 years) and Works in Progress trainee research rounds coordinator (1 year)) and worked closely with UOHI leadership representing the UOHI trainees.

Finally, I am also a woman with lived experience. From a young age I experienced an arrhythmia called supraventricular tachycardia (SVT). Although my SVT was not particularly dangerous to my health, it had a major effect on my quality of life. The more I studied and learned about women's heart health, the more I became an advocate for my own heart health. I was empowered by other women to take charge of my own journey and to seek the treatment I needed to improve my quality of life.