"I May Look Like What You Want, but it Don’t Feel Good Anymore”:
The Impact of Medical Tampering on Women
with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome’s Sexuality

In a mixed methodology study, 45 women with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS; an intersex condition) shared their experiences, knowledge, and ideas about their sexuality and the impact of “medical tampering” (e.g., 87% had had gonad surgery) on their sense of self as women, sexual beings, and partners. Grounded Theory was used to analyze responses of 15 of these women to open-ended questions. Relevant responses to closed-ended questions are also reported descriptively. Results indicate that the construct of AIS women’s sexuality emerges as a complex relationship between gender, sexuality, and pleasure within a social and relational context.

Biographies
1. Carm De Santis, MSc, RMFT, is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF) at St. Jerome’s University in the University of Waterloo. She is interested in the construction of self in relation to sexuality and the use of critical self-reflection in learning. She teaches courses on couples, marriage and family therapy and social justice.

2. BJ Rye, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Psychology and Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies departments at St. Jerome’s University in the University of Waterloo. Her research explores various aspects of sexuality and she has published articles on homosexuality, intersexuality, sex and leisure, and adolescent behaviour. She has also published, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Adolescence (2007) with Maureen Drysdale. She teaches courses on human sexuality, psychological perspectives on gender and sex, and psychosexual organization.