

pERC Member – Ethicist

Jennifer Bell, PhD, MA, BA

Dr. Jennifer A.H. Bell is a bioethicist and psychosocial oncology researcher at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, University Health Network, Toronto, Canada. She is an assistant professor (status only) in the University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry and Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and member of the Joint Centre for Bioethics. Jennifer received a bachelor's degree in philosophy, specializing in bioethics, from the University of Toronto, a master's degree in philosophy and biomedical ethics from McGill University, and a PhD in interdisciplinary studies (bioethics and psychosocial oncology) from the University of British Columbia. She is an alumna of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Psychosocial Oncology Research Training (PORT), and Ethics of Health Research and Policy training programs.

Jennifer's program of research addresses urgent ethical issues at the frontier of psychosocial oncology and cancer care through the use of empirical and normative bioethics, critical and feminist methodologies, and qualitative and mixed methods. Innovative discovery, precision medicine, and breakthrough therapies are fast emerging as sources of hope for people with cancer. These revolutionary advances in cancer care also pose significant ethical issues for professionals and patients, such as equitable access, safeguarding the vulnerable from known and potential harms (especially those facing limited treatment options), as well as the emergence of new ethical dilemmas that often accompany complex medical innovation. Jennifer's current research addresses ethical issues at the forefront of complex decisions in cancer care, with specific research aims under the themes of novel therapeutics, clinical trials, and medical assistance in dying. Jennifer's research is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute, Colorectal Cancer Canada, University of Toronto, and the Global Institute of Psychosocial, Palliative and End-of-Life Care.