

GENDER AND RADIATION IMPACT Project

Mary Olson is the Founder of the Gender and Radiation Impact Project and is clear her life's mission is to bring to light to the disproportionate impact of radiation on girls and women.

Over her long career, Olson has studied radiation health consequences with some of the leading radiation researchers of the 20th Century including Bertell, Stewart, Caldicott and Wing, and was featured in the educational film "[The Ultimate Wish: Ending the Nuclear Age](#)." Through her work as a staff biologist and policy analyst at [Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#), she has worked for decades to improve public policy on highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel and plutonium.

After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011, Olson decided to pursue questions about greater harm to girls and women from ionizing exposures. From a study of survivors of US nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki compiled over sixty years, Olson learned there is a measurably greater harm from radiation to girls and women. Her findings were based on an independent review of data found in [Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation VII, Phase 2](#) and published in a briefing paper entitled "[Atomic Radiation is More Harmful to Women](#)." This critical analysis of gender and radiation has formed the basis of her core work since 2011 and led to the formation of Gender and Radiation Impact Project in 2017.

Olson's background in biology, biochemistry and her own experience with radioactive contamination during a research job as a young woman have put her in a unique position to speak publically on radiation policy from a health, safety and humanitarian perspectives.

In 2014, Olson spoke at the global Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, and in 2015, at the United Nations during the Review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Last year, Olson was a featured speaker in a five-week educational tour of Japan, spoke in St. Petersburg, Russia at an event sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the medical consequences of using nuclear weapons, and at the EU Gender Summit in Brussels.

This year, she will return to the United Nations to present on gender and radiation during the negotiations on a new global treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

Olson hopes to inspire cancer prevention strategies worldwide through initiating a new discussion about ionizing radiation and the human lifecycle. Such protection will also contribute to more successful reproduction and the viability of the next, and subsequent generations.

"The finding that girls and women suffer more cancer, disease, and death from radiation exposure than do boys and men is news and not reflected in current regulation or practice," says Olson. "I am ready to engage the public health, medical and research communities as a catalyst and facilitator with the goal, at the very least, of a federal warning that gender and age are significant factors in risk of cancer from ionizing radiation exposure."