

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN THE UBC DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS  
AND GYNAECOLOGY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WOMEN'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND PERINATAL SERVICES BC

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**POSTING EXPIRY**

September 31, 2018

**Postdoctoral Fellowship in Perinatal and Postpartum health & Gender Based Violence**

Violence against women and girls is pervasive and linked to poor health outcomes across the lifespan. Experiencing gender-based violence is associated with compromised mental health, problematic substance use and poor sexual, reproductive and maternal outcomes, including higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, insufficient prenatal care, and preterm birth. In addition to a significantly greater likelihood of complicated deliveries, pregnant women who had experiences of sexual and/or physical abuse throughout childhood were more likely to be fearful of childbirth compared to non-abused women. In addition, rates of physical and sexual violence show that approximately 30% of women globally are affected. The implications of a history of sexual abuse on perinatal health, including mental health, and postpartum health, is an area of limited research. There is evidence that Women with a history of sexual abuse were significantly more likely to be hospitalized during pregnancy as well as have pregnancy complications compared to women without a history of sexual abuse. Women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, specifically, has significantly higher levels of cortisol awakening response (CAR) throughout gestation compared to women who reported non-sexual childhood abuse or no history of abuse. Such cortisol dysregulation during the third semester of pregnancy is related to shorter gestational length, fetal growth restrictions, as well as increased cortisol and behavioral stress reactivity in 1-day old infants. Current practices for assessing history of sexual violence among women seeking perinatal health care are unknown, but anecdotal evidence from BC Women's Hospital suggests that this is not a routine part of clinical management.

We are seeking a Postdoctoral Fellow who will contribute new knowledge to this area and knowledge translation by:

- (1) Assessing health care provider (ob/gyns, family practice physicians, midwives) practice around assessing for past and current experiences of intimate and gender-based violence, including a history of sexual abuse;
- (2) Develop and validate a clinical tool that can be used to assess for a history of sexual abuse among the perinatal population;
- (3) Implement and assess the perinatal outcomes following the implementation of this clinical tool at BC Women's Hospital;
- (4) Lead a multidisciplinary provincial process to update and disseminate provincial guidelines for health care providers to address intimate partner and gender-based violence during pregnancy, including the development of appropriate practice resources or tools;
- (5) Develop and implement a provincial knowledge translation strategy for implementation of provincial guidelines and healthcare provider education;
- (6) Assess the intervention to improve guideline uptake and appropriate assessment of intimate partner and gender-based violence, including documentation on the antenatal record and related assessment of data quality in the Perinatal Data Registry.

Applicants will have a PhD in a health-related discipline, such as: clinical psychology, counselling psychology, health psychology, health services research, interdisciplinary studies, nursing, reproductive and developmental sciences or another discipline related to the evaluation of perinatal mental health, with some previous experience and interests in the area of perinatal mental health or gender-based violence. The successful applicant will be responsible for developing a comprehensive research proposal, securing research ethics board approval, and contributing to grant applications to support this research, as well as leading the guideline development and knowledge translation activities described at Perinatal Services BC. There is an expectation that the Fellow will contribute to at least 1-2 peer reviewed publications per year, present at interdisciplinary and/or BC Women's Research rounds twice/year, and participate in at least two academic conferences per year. Because this Fellowship is jointly sponsored by the Women's Health Research Institute and Perinatal Services BC (PSBC), the Fellow will have a unique opportunity to be engaged in applied knowledge generation and translation to improve maternal and newborn health in BC with Perinatal Services BC, as well as to be mentored by and collaborate with leading researchers and healthcare providers at UBC, BC Women's Hospital, and to mentor junior trainees. At least part of the Fellow's time will be spent in the research laboratory of the Principal Investigator, Lori Brotto, PhD and at Perinatal Services BC, under the supervision of the Executive Director, Tamil Kendall, PhD.

**Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Fellowship is for three years, and salary is \$55,000/year plus benefits. There is an expectation that the candidate will apply for, and accept, external funding from provincial and federal funding agencies.**

Preferred start date is on or before **January 1, 2019** but is negotiable. The applicant will be required to provide a rationale and justification for applying for this Fellowship, and outline their specific objectives for the duration of the three-year fellowship. Interested and qualified applicants should send curriculum vitae, a description of your research experience and most significant research accomplishments, a statement of your research interests, and contact information for three referees via email to:

Ms. Marsha Simons

Email: [marsha.simons@cw.bc.ca](mailto:marsha.simons@cw.bc.ca)

Executive Assistant, Women's Health Research Institute

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

*Equity and diversity are essential to academic excellence. An open and diverse community fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or discouraged. We encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the B.C. Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person.*

*All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.*