# WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE



# ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



# **OUR YEAR IN REVIEW**

This annual report represents a celebration of community from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. We invite you to read through our year as we profile people, partnerships and programming. Join us in celebrating some of 2022-2023 highlights, and review our membership and online metrics.

## **About Us**

Established in 2006 in Vancouver, British Columbia, the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) is one of only three research institutes in Canada with an explicit focus on women's health. We are the women's health research arm of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and a UBC Faculty of Medicine Research Centre.

The WHRI is devoted to improving the health and health care of girls and women through knowledge generation, serving as a catalyst for research in women's health and supporting an expanding provincial and national network of women's health researchers, policy makers and healthcare providers. We strive to be equitable and inclusive in how we collaborate, in what we prioritize, and in all that we do. To achieve our goals our research respects, works alongside, collaborates with, and supports the health of women across the 2SLGBTQIA+ spectrum.

With its membership totaling over 500 investigators, the WHRI engages research partners across the province to support, enhance, and champion women's health research. We know that translating evidence into action is central to improving health and health care, so the WHRI has an important role to play in supporting knowledge translation (KT) initiatives.



# **OUR COMMUNITY**



## **PEOPLE**

This year we said farewell to two members of our WHRI Executive, Dr. Angela Kaida and Dr. Liisa Galea. As WHRI Scientific Advisor, Dr. Kaida led the development of our Strategic Framework for Trainees + Mentorship, and the rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on WHRI trainees. Dr. Galea led the creation of our Strategic Framework for Partnership Engagement. We thank them both for their valuable contributions to the WHRI community and continued commitments to women's health research.



Thanks to the <u>BC Women's Health Foundation</u>, we were able to continue to offer our <u>Catalyst Grant</u> and <u>Graduate + Fellowship Awards</u> to the WHRI community. In 2022, our Graduate + Fellowship Awards increased from \$13,500 to \$21,000. In March 2022, the BCWHF also launched the inaugural "Women's Health Research Month" making the celebration of our community, an annual, month-long awareness activity.











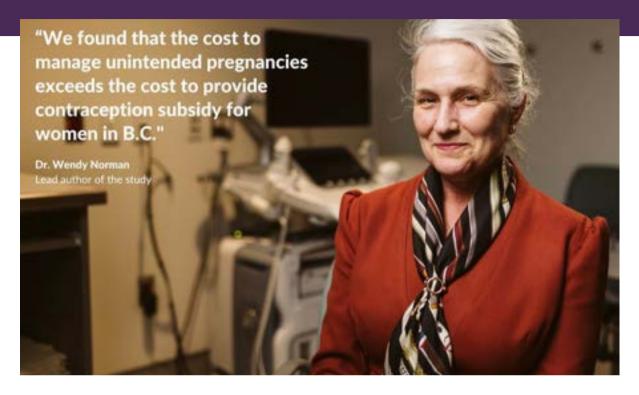




# **PROGRAMMING**

On March 8, 2023, the <u>Eighth Annual WHRI Symposium</u> was held in partnership with BC Mental Health and Substance Use Research Institute, thanks to collaboration with Dr. Jehannine Austin. The theme, "Advancing Women's Mental Health Through Research", featured presentations from researchers, trainees, and patient partners, which reached almost 300 attendees.

# **2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS**



## 1. CONTRACEPTION RESEARCH IMPACT

Research and knowledge mobilization by WHRI investigator resulted in British Columbia being the first province in Canada to offer free prescription contraception.

Based on research evidence and advocacy lead by WHRI researcher, <u>Dr. Wendy Norman</u> and her <u>Contraception</u> and Abortion Research Team (CART), in partnership with BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre (BCW), British Columbia is now the first province in Canada to offer free prescription contraception for residents (as of April 1, 2023). This policy change is intended to ensure equitable access to contraception and to reduce the rate of unintended pregnancies, ultimately saving money for the province's healthcare system.

Dr. Norman's research has been working toward this goal since 2011, including conducting a door-to-door survey and regularly hosting stakeholder engagement, to gather data to support evidence-informed policy development. In partnership with BCW, Dr. Norman and her CART team were influential in bringing about this policy change through research, advocacy and implementation planning with the provincial government and other partners.

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## 2. COLLABORATING ON DIGITAL HEALTH

The WHRI and BCCHR partner to launch a joint Digital Health Research Office for the Oak Street Campus to support digital innovations in women's, newborn's and children's health.

Recognizing the rapid advances within the technology and digital health sector. and the influence of these advances on health delivery and research, the WHRI and BCCHR have partnered to create a joint Digital Health Research Office for both their research communities. This office is currently staffed by a Digital Health Research Manager and Digital Health Research Coordinator who will work to build the <u>digital health research</u> program for the Oak Street Campus by creating opportunities to learn and share knowledge related to digital innovations in women's, newborn's, and children's health.

The Digital Health Research Manager will actively engage with decision makers in government, health authorities and other partners to accelerate the implementation of evidence-based, locally produced digital health research interventions. This office will continue to build on established WHRI and BCCHR joint digital health initiatives, including a monthly digital health research seminar series, digital health week programing and a Michael Smith Health Research BC funded project to develop a shared research agenda in perinatal digital innovation.



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## 3. ENHANCING OUR SERVICES

WHRI launches new qualitative research and integrated knowledge translation methods consultation and support services for research teams to increase research impact.

Knowledge translation (KT) activities aim to close the gap between research discovery and implementation by improving the use of research evidence in practice, policy, and further research. The WHRI has an established commitment to mobilizing women's and newborn health in British Columbia, as outlined in the WHRI's <u>Strategic Framework</u> for Knowledge Translation.

Building on our established leadership in this area and support provided by our KT Manager, the team has been expanded to

include a KT Research Coordinator. The Coordinator provides expertise in participatory methods, qualitative research, emergent design, and integrated knowledge translation, which will be provided via training, consultations, and mentorship. These expanded research and KT methodologies will further position the WHRI as a KT leader and a critical KT enabler for women's and newborn health research impact.

## 4. PATIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH

A WHRI investigator received a CIHR Patient-Oriented Research Award – Transition to Leadership Stream to examine the effect of Canada's medical abortion drug policy on patient access and outcomes.

WHRI early career investigator, Dr. Laura Schummers, received the <u>CIHR Patient-Oriented Research Award - Transition to Leadership Stream</u>. This is a 4 year funding award totaling \$460,000 which will support Dr. Schummer's research to use a patient-oriented approach to exam the effect of Canada's unique medical abortion drug policy on patient abortion access and outcomes. This award supports the career launch of the next generation of patient-oriented researchers and



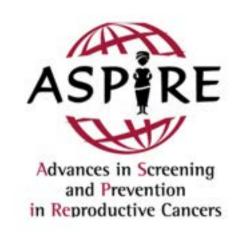
their continued development through supportive connections with leaders of the patient-oriented research community. This award recognizes Dr. Schummers as an emerging national leader in patient-oriented research will enable her to engage patients and multisectoral partners in all phases of her research.

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## 5. GLOBAL CERVICAL CANCER RESEARCH

A publication from a WHRI investigator demonstrates that a novel community-based method of cervical cancer screening can be integrated into the health system in low-resource setting.

A publication in Nature Medicine by WHRI researcher Dr. Gina Ogilvie and team demonstrated the feasibility of integrating a community-based self-collected HPV-based cervix screening into an existing health system in a low-resource rural setting with a high burden of cervical cancer. In partnership with the Uganda Cancer Institute, Dr. Ogilvie's team conducted a two-armed pragmatic cluster randomized trial in the rural Mayuge region of Uganda (the ASPIRE-Mayuge trial). The goal of the trial was to compare the effectiveness of two community-based cervical cancer screening models using self-collected HPV testing: 1) Community health worker recruitment (door-to-door); and 2) community health meetings. The ASPIRE-Mayage trial showed that implementation of door-to-door HPV screening led to better attendance of followup treatment services but required more personnel when compared to community



health days. The results from this study will inform the national scale-up of cervical cancer screening in Uganda, aligning with the World Health Organization's target of achieving cervical cancer elimination through the pillar of increased HPV screening coverage.

https://www.globalhpvcontrol.org/aspire



# **OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS**

From April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023, our investigators have advanced knowledge through a substantial increase in scientific publications and trainee supervision. The excellent calibre of research at the WHRI continues to attract competitive external funding and our provincial network of women's health research grew significantly this past year.

1244

#### **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

23% increase in research publications over the previous year

48.5M

#### **MILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDING**

3% increase in external research funding over the previous year

1021

#### **RESEARCH TRAINEES**

4% increase learners supervised by our investigators over the previous year

550

#### **INVESTIGATORS**

17% increase in our provincial network of researchers over the previous year



# **OUR YEAR ONLINE**

As our online home, WHRI.org, continues to gain traction, our social media channel growth continues to be exponential on LinkedIn.

o 555

followers.

- **NEW TWITTER FOLLOWERS**Contributing to a total of 4.7k total
- **6**400
  - FACEBOOK VIEWERS REACHED Through our two Wellness Exchange livestreams.
- **936%** 
  - INCREASE IN PODCAST FOLLOWERS

From 10 countries.

**@** 42

# FACT FRIDAY POSTS ON INSTAGRAM

Which was introduced last year as a weekly educational series.

**6** 48%

# INCREASE IN OUR LINKEDIN AUDIENCE

Resulting in over 800 followers on this platform.

- **169** 
  - COUNTRIES REACHED ON OUR WEBSITE

And over 29k users accessing the site.

# **OUR PEOPLE**

### WHRI Executive

DR. LORI BROTTO Executive Director

DR. GINA OGILVIE Senior Advisor, Research. BC Women's Hospital Associate Director, WHRI

DR. LIISA GALEA Scientific Advisor

DR. ANGELA KAIDA Scientific Advisor

#### WHRI Staff

MARYAM ABOMOSLIM Research Coordinator

SANARYA ALJIF Research Assistant

MARCELLA DASILVA Research Assistant

**GAL AV-GAY** Statistician, RID Team

AREZOU AZAMPANAH Research Coordinator

AMY BOOTH Research Manager

TRAVIS BOULTER Research Coordinator

**EMMA BRANCH** Research Data Analyst

DR. KATHRYN DEWAR Senior Research Manager

SARA DERIKVAND Research Manager

**SALLY CHEN** Research Coordinator. Digital Health

JENEESHA DHALIWAL Research Assistant

SABINA DOBRER Statistician, WHRI

**LUCIA FORWARD** Research Manager

**ERIN FRASER** Research Coordinator

SHANNON GARNETT Executive Assistant

Research Assistant SELA GRAYS

Research Assistant

ISABELLE GOUIN

ISABELLE KORCHINSKI Research Assistant

**EVELYN MAAN** Senior Research Manager, RID

NISHA MARSHA Research Assistant

NADIA MITHANI Research Manager CAROLA MUÑOZ Research Manager

**NADIA MITHANI** Research Project Manager

**FAINESS MWAKISIMBA** Research Assistant

**HEATHER NOGA** Research Manager

**MELODY TSAI** Research Assistant

ZAHRA PAKZAD Research Manager

KIRAN PARMAR Research Assistant

**BETH PAYNE** Research Manager, Digital Health

SORAYA UTOKAPARCH

Finance Administrator

TIFFANY REEVE Research Manager

JOCELLE REFOL Communications Assistant STEPHEN RISTOW Research Assistant

**TALOR SACRE** 

Research Assistant

**LAURIE SMITH** 

Research Program Manager

**NICOLA ST-ONGE** Research Proiect

Manager

JULIA SANTANA-PARRILLA Research Coordinator

SARAH OSIFO Communications Coordinator

NICOLE PRESTLEY Manager, Research +

Knowledge Translation

MARKETA WALDRUM Research Manager

**MELISSA WATT** Research Coordinator

**ADRIANNA XUE** Research Assistant

## **Scientific Advisory Board**

DR. JEHANNINE AUSTIN MS. GENESA GREENING DR. SHEONA MITCHELL

DR. SANDESH SHIVANANDA

DR. HAMIDEH BAYRAMPOUR DR. GILLIAN HANLEY

DR. JERILYNN PRIOR

DR. JOANNE WEINBERG

DR. KRISTIN CAMPBELL

DR. JOELLE LEMOULT

DR. LAURA SCHUMMERS

DR. PAUL YONG