

**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.



Provincial Health
Services Authority



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.



PARTNERSHIPS

Thanks to the BC Women’s Health Foundation, we were able to continue to offer our Catalyst Grant and Graduate + Fellowship Awards 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 Eighth Annual WHRI Symposium 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

"We found that the cost to manage unintended pregnancies exceeds the cost to provide contraception subsidy for women in B.C."

Dr. Wendy Norman
Lead author of the study



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, Dr. Wendy Norman and her Contraception 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.

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 digital health research 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 programming and a Michael Smith Health Research BC funded project to develop a shared research agenda in perinatal digital innovation.



<https://bit.ly/3TuhyDv>

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 [Strategic Framework](#) 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 [CIHR Patient-Oriented Research Award – Transition to Leadership Stream](#). 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.



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-Mayuge trial showed that implementation of door-to-door HPV screening led to better attendance of follow-up 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.



555

NEW TWITTER FOLLOWERS

Contributing to a total of 4.7k total followers.



42

FACT FRIDAY POSTS ON INSTAGRAM

Which was introduced last year as a weekly educational series.



400

FACEBOOK VIEWERS REACHED

Through our two Wellness Exchange livestreams.



48%

INCREASE IN OUR LINKEDIN AUDIENCE

Resulting in over 800 followers on this platform.



36%

INCREASE IN PODCAST FOLLOWERS

From 10 countries.



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
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ADRIANNA XUE
Research Assistant

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DR. PAUL YONG