



WOMEN'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
AT BC WOMEN'S



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

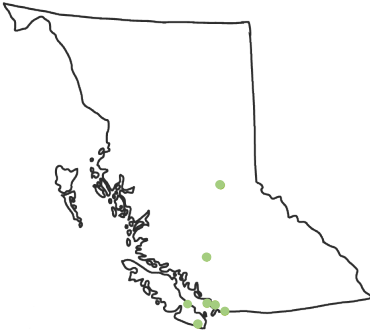
APRIL 1, 2019 - MARCH 31, 2020

In November of 2019, the WHRI [2019–2024 Strategic Plan](#) was released. We are proud that this plan was informed through consultation with a diverse group of WHRI members, staff, key stakeholders in the health research and education communities, patients, Indigenous partners, and the WHRI Scientific Advisory Committee. Four priorities guide the implementation of this 5-year strategic plan: 1) increase capacity to catalyze new women’s health research; 2) nurture existing relationships and cultivate new collaborations; 3) increase and promote research translation, implementation, and communication; and 4) to be a national leader in advancing women’s health research. Over this year, we have been active and intentional about supporting activities that fulfill those priorities.

## COVID CONTEXT

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic hit British Columbia, our research institute was required to move all of our operations and research virtually. We would like to thank everyone in our community who helped us pivot to this virtual environment. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has dramatically impacted women’s health research, researchers, and trainees, as exemplified in our trainee survey. But we remain steadfast in our commitment to our members across the province to find creative, innovative, and meaningful ways of supporting women’s health research. This commitment will see us through the next year of our strategic plan.

## ABOUT US



The Women’s Health Research Institute is the women’s health research arm of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). It is also a UBC Faculty of Medicine Centre.

We are 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.

Our investigators make significant contributions to improving the health and health care of girls and women in British Columbia and around the world through knowledge generation. The Women’s Health Research Institute is one of only a few research institutes worldwide (and one of only two in Canada) to focus exclusively on women’s health.

We aim to underscore the importance of advancing research that examines the unique health needs of women throughout the lifespan and spotlight the world-class research that is currently being conducted in the province.

### OUR 322 INVESTIGATORS REPRESENT

- 
- 7 universities in British Columbia
- 16 departments at the University of British Columbia
- 18 universities globally

## MEASURING UP

In our first year of performance in our new strategic plan, the WHRI has actualized commitments to our four strategic priorities. We have done so with the underpinning of our values of equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as our four strategic frameworks: partnership engagement; patient engagement; knowledge translation; and trainees and mentorship. Here is how:

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: INCREASE CAPACITY TO CATALYZE NEW WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

In August 2019, thanks to the support of the [BC Women's Health Foundation](#), the WHRI launched its annual Catalyst Grant Competition and doubled the number of [awards to six](#), each for \$25,000. The competition also introduced a new structure with two applicant streams: **Academic Researcher**, and **Clinician Investigator**. These Catalyst grants are intended to catalyze new research projects or ideas that have the potential to garner larger funding in the future.



In November 2019, the WHRI Digital Health Research Manager compiled results for the [Digital Health Survey Report](#). The survey results aim to inform a digital health services and research hub to support clinicians, researchers, and decision makers who are leveraging technologies to enhance research and health service delivery to women and newborns. To further catalyze existing digital health research, the WHRI presented [Women's Digital Health Research Awards](#) to Dr. Caroline Sanders and Ms. Nevena Rebic.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: NURTURE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTIVATE NEW COLLABORATIONS



On May 6, 2019, the WHRI, in partnership with Vancouver Island Health Authority and the University of Victoria (UVic) held a [women's health symposium](#). The event was funded by a Collaborative Research Mobility Award from UBC awarded to Dr. Brotto. The symposium brought together faculty members, staff, patient partners, community groups, and trainees from across Vancouver Island to hear about new research in women's health. The day started with a trainee breakfast led by Dr. Karen Urbanoski, who shared personal experiences and insights about charting an academic career in women's health. It also led to new research collaborations between the WHRI and UVic researchers and an intention to hold similar WHRI events on the island in the future.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: INCREASE AND PROMOTE RESEARCH TRANSLATION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND COMMUNICATION



In March 2020, the WHRI launched the [@WomensResearch podcast](#). With [over half the population](#) listening to podcasts, this new medium is an effective and accessible tool for communicating with all members of the research community, including the general public. The podcast is a tool for the research community to disseminate and discuss research findings, methods, and provide a forum to discuss pressing issues in the field of women's health research such as stigma, and, sex and gender-based research.

To date, the @WomensResearch podcast has been listened to in nine countries globally.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4: BE A NATIONAL LEADER IN ADVANCING WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Created a new national partnership amongst Canada's three women's health research institutes. At a summit held in Toronto in November 2019, the leaders of Canada's three women's health research institutes (Women's Health Research Institute, Vancouver; Women and Children's Health Research Institute, Edmonton; and Women's College Research Institute, Toronto) came together for the first time to discuss the present and future of research that strives to close the health gaps for women. The three Foundation CEOs (BC Women's Health Foundation; Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation; and Women's College Hospital Foundation) also participated in the panel and discussed opportunities for partnership amongst the Foundations in a manner that would raise the profile of women's health and research across Canada.

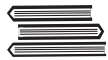
The attendees included past donors, the Ontario Strategy for Patient Oriented Research, various women corporate leaders, the federal Ministry of Health, and staff from our Communications teams. The summit ended with a commitment and excitement for moving the towards a pan-Canadian women's health research strategy and national network. To facilitate this goal, a Project Manager was hired to oversee the activities required for the initiation of this new national partnership, which is called the Partnership for Women's Health Research-Canada (PWHR-Canada).

The first activities involved defining themselves and their mission, identifying some strategic priorities, and agreeing upon a governance structure. Stay tuned for more in 2021, including an official launch!



## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

From April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020, 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.



752\* PUBLICATIONS

12% increase in research publications over the year  
\*97% peer-reviewed



322 INVESTIGATORS

22% increase in our provincial network of researchers over the year



\$30.3 MILLION IN FUNDING

22% increase in external research funding over the year



736 RESEARCH TRAINEES

7% increase in learners supervised by our investigators over the year

## OUR YEAR ONLINE



3.4k  
followers

5.1k  
likes

1.9k  
retweets

812k  
impressions



728  
followers

33.3k  
impressions

24.6k  
users reached



858  
followers

1.8k  
likes

Connect with us on social! Find us @womensresearch on Twitter and Instagram, and as Women's Health Research Institute on Facebook and LinkedIn.



Our virtual home, WHRI.org had a similar record performance with 26.6k unique visitors from 154 countries.

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

DR. JEHANNINE AUSTIN	DR. JOELLE LEMOULT
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DR. GILLIAN HANLEY	DR. JOANNE WEINBERG
DR. ANGELA KAIDA	DR. PAUL YONG

## WHRI EXECUTIVE

DR. LORI BROTTTO <i>Executive Director</i>	DR. LIISA GALEA <i>Scientific Advisor</i>
DR. GINA OGILVIE <i>Senior Advisor, Research, BC Women's Hospital Associate Director, WHRI</i>	DR. ANGELA KAIDA <i>Scientific Advisor</i>

## WHRI STAFF

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DR. KATHRYN DEWAR <i>Senior Research Manager</i>	ZAHRA PAKZAD <i>Research Projects Manager</i>
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AREZU MOSHREFZADEH <i>Research Projects Manager</i>	ERIC LUSSIER <i>Research Development Facilitator</i>
CAROLA MUÑOZ <i>Research Projects Manager</i>	DARLENE TAYLOR <i>Project Coordinator</i>
HEATHER NOGA <i>Research Projects Manager</i>	AMY BOOTH <i>Research Coordinator</i>
NANCY LIPSKY <i>Research Projects Manager</i>	AMBER CAMPBELL <i>Research Coordinator</i>
EVELYN MAAN <i>Research Projects Manager</i>	SHANLEA GORDON <i>Research Coordinator</i>
	MADISON LACKIE <i>Research Coordinator</i>



GAIL VINCENTE <i>Research Coordinator</i>	VALENTINA MORSCHBACH <i>Research Assistant</i>
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