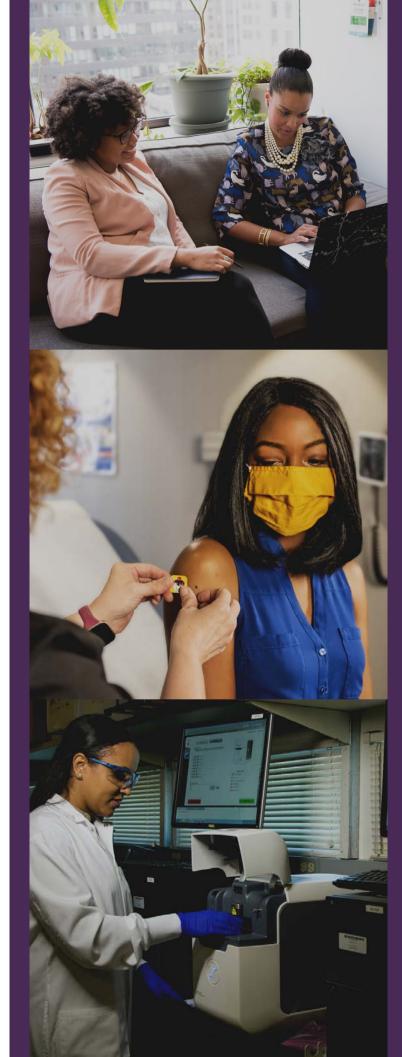




2021-2022







# Our year in review

### April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022

This annual report presents a period of adaptation with the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition back to in-person activities. During this time, the WHRI has offered in-person, remote, and hybrid opportunities to engage, allowing us to connect with our community in new ways. You will some of the results of those activities reflected in the highlights below.



### 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 totalling nearly 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.



# 2021–2022 Highlights

The WHRI debuted a new format for its annual symposium event by adding a dedicated mentorship and networking workshop for trainees engaged in women's health research.

On March 9, the WHRI the hosted its <u>Seventh Annual Women's Health Research Symposium</u> as a hybrid virtual and in-person event with close to 200 attendees, marking the first inperson event for the institute since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theme, From Cell to Society: Women's Health Research to Address Shared Global Challenges, centred on catalyzing women's health research to address shared global health challenges with an emphasis on the scale, spread and impact of local research at the global level. In response to the lost opportunities research trainees experienced during the pandemic with respect to networking and mentorship, in particular, the symposium was restructured to prioritize the need of our trainee community. In addition to the main symposium program for the WHRI community, this year's event featured a trainee-focused breakfast presentation, a poster session where trainees could present recent research findings to colleagues and the event ended with trainee-specific workshop entitled: "Hopes, Dreams, and Nightmares: An interactive Mentorship and Networking Workshop for Trainees."



Champion in Women's Health Research to Address Shared Global Challenges (Early Career)







The WHRI launched a new multi-stakeholder participatory project to inform guidance for gender-equitable practice within BC's women's health research community.



In September 2021, WHRI Scientific Advisor, Dr. Angela Kaida and Research User Co-Lead Beverly Pomeroy were awarded a Michael Smith Health Research BC Convening and Collaborating Award (C2) for their project: **"Beyond the Binary in BC: taking a patient-oriented and trauma-informed approach to building partnerships and dialogue to incorporate gender equity into women's health research**".

The C2 award, which is designed to build collaborations between health researchers and other health system users such as patients and providers, catalyzed a critical conversation surrounding gender equitable women's health research led by the WHRI. The Beyond the Binary project has mobilized stakeholders across PHSA programs: BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, TransCare BC, and BC Children's Hospital Research, as well as across academic institutions: UBC, SFU, and UNBC. Its Research Steering Committee includes Nicole Prestley, Julia Santana Parrilla, Dr. Tamara Baldwin, Dr. Skye Barbic, Dr. Wendy Robinson, Dr. Gavin Stuart, Dr. Saraswathi Vedam, Dr. Caroline Sanders, Dr. Wendy Bond, Dr. Michelle Chan, Laurel Evans, and Lindsay Carpenter. The project has created a safe space to discuss a complex topic and provide a responsive environment. Through collaboration with people from trans, intersex, research, health, ethics, and academic communities, the WHRI is currently developing context-specific resources and recommendations for researchers and health decision-makers to bridge this knowledge gap.

The WHRI, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, and the BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services Research Institute have jointly established an Oak Street Campus Research Institutes Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group.

This joint committee is being co-led by Dr. Lori Brotto, WHRI Executive Director and Dr. Wendy Robinson, BCCHR Associate Director of Research. The purpose of this working group is to support the Oak Street Campus Research Institutes in identifying needs, developing policies and providing constructive change to instill respect, diversity, equity and inclusion within our communities. While this work still in its initial stages, one of the main aims of this working group is to establish guidelines for EDI activities across the Research Institutes.





#### July 7, 2022 12:00-1:00pm

### Digital Health Research Innovation Series Presented by BCCHR and WHRI INDUSTRY PARTNER PANEL: TEAM UP, APPLY FOR FUNDING, IMPROVE PATIENT CARE







Marina Pavlovic CO-FOUNDER & CEO ELI HEALTH



David Helliwell CO-FOUNDER THRIVE HEALTH





Marc Fiume CO-FOUNDER & CEO DNASTACK



The WHRI is collaborating with the BC Children's Research Institute (BCCHR) to host a joint <u>Digital Health Education Series</u>.

The series aims to support investigators and trainees engaged in digital health projects and to celebrate innovation in women's, newborn, and children's health in BC. The monthly seminar series, which features presentations and workshops from both industry and research experts, was established in order to build capacity and knowledge translation for digital health research and innovation across our research and clinical communities. This virtual learning series engages researchers, care providers, and other stakeholders interested in incorporating digital technologies in a health intervention or health systems process and aims to equip learners to succeed – from project initiation through to implementation.





Session 1: Evaluating Health Information Systems (HIS): Methods and Considerations Presenter: Dr.: Exitabeth Barycki Date: December 2, 2021

Learners should be able to: (1) Define what a health information system is (2) Define what can be evaluated (3) Identify the main approaches used in evaluating HIS (4) Identify when an evaluation should take place in development.

Session 2: Applying Human Centred Design (HCD) for Better Digital Health Interventions Presenters: Lee Payne, Dr. Helen Monkman, Misha Hasan Date: February 3, 2022

Learners should be able to: (1) Understand the concept of HCD applied to product development. (2) Apply design limiting in development and evaluation of digital health technologies. (3) Identify methods for human centred digital health interventions. (4) Understand the importance of digital health itteracy in design.

View the summary of the presentations and slides



A <u>publication</u> by WHRI investigator, Dr. Deborah Money, provided the first evidence that SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy is significantly associated with increased risk of adverse maternal outcomes and preterm birth.

This cross-Canada surveillance study included 6012 completed pregnancies between March 2020 and October 2021. Among cases of infection during pregnancy compared with cases of infection among the general Canadian population of reproductive-age females, there was a significantly increased risk of SARS-CoV-2-related hospitalization and intensive care unit admission. Among cases of infection during pregnancy compared with pregnant individuals without SARS-CoV-2 infection, there was a significantly increased risk of preterm birth. This seminal paper, published the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) earned an Altmetric Attention Score of 479, which puts it in the top 5% of all research outputs ever tracked by Altmetric (99th percentile). This publication and its findings have been mentioned by 17 news outlets, 5 blog posts and been shared by 544 Twitter users.

WHRI investigator Dr. Luis Nacul received a CIHR Operating Grant to lead a clinical trial on the use of low-dose naltrexone for people living with 'post-covid fatigue syndrome' (PCFS).

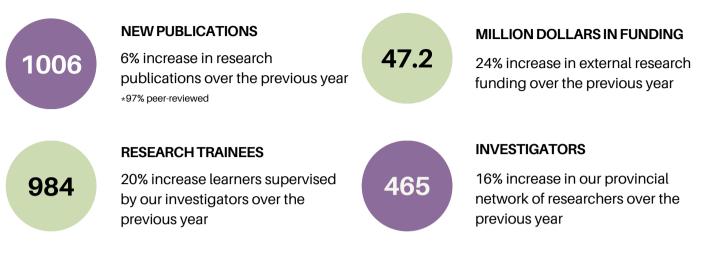
'Post-covid fatigue syndrome' (PCFS) is a term being used to describe a set of symptoms in people who have not recovered to previous levels of health and function after contracting COVID-19. Clinically, PCFS resembles post-viral fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).

Low-dose naltrexone has been used among patients with ME/CFS to help relieve symptoms like pain and fatigue. With this funding, Dr. Nacul's team will conduct a randomized parallel group doubleblinded placebo-controlled trial based out of BC Women's Hospital Complex Chronic Diseases Program, in collaboration with the Provincial Post-COVID Recovery clinics, to investigate whether low-dose naltrexone can be used safely to reduce symptoms experienced by people with PCFS, too.

Findings from this study stand to benefit people who experience PCFS and lend support for further studies on the use of low-dose naltrexone for post-viral fatigue syndrome and ME/CFS.

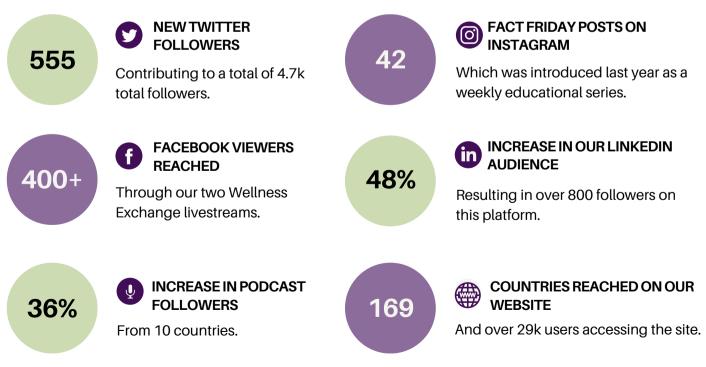


## Our year in numbers ...



From April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022, 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.

## Our year online ...



UPDATED JAN 11, 2023



## 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

DR. ARIANNE ALBERT Senior Biostatistician

JANICE ANDRADE Research Manager

AREZOU AZAMPANAH Research Coordinator

SATTHA BEHEROZE Research Laboratory Coordinator

AMY BOOTH Research Coordinator

TRAVIS BOULTER Research Coordinator

EMMA BRANCH Research Data Analyst

AMBER CAMPBELL Research Coordinator

VICTORIA CARRIQUIRIBORDE Research Assistant

DR. KATHRYN DEWAR Senior Research Manager IANNA FOLKES Research Assistant

SHANNON GARNETT Executive Assistant

SHANLEA GORDON Research Manager

ISABELLE GOUIN Research Assistant

ISABELLE KORCHINSKI Research Assistant

ANIRUDH KOTLO Research Coordinator

ERIC LUSSIER Research Development Facilitator

EVELYN MAAN Senior Research Manager

FRANNIE MACKENZIE Research Coordinator

JESSICA MADDOX Research Assistant DR. ULRIKE MAYER Statistical Assistant

NADIA MITHANI Research Project Manager

CHARITY MUDHIKWA Research Assistant

CAROLA MUÑOZ Research Projects Manager

MELISSA NELSON Communications Coordinator

HEATHER NOGA Research Projects Manager

ZAHRA PAKZAD Research Manager

KIRAN PARMAR Research Assistant

NICOLE PRESTLEY Manager, Research + Knowledge Translation

TIFFANY REEVE Research Manager

STEPHEN RISTOW Research Project Assistant TALOR SACRE Research Assistant

DR. STEPHANIE SKOURTES Manager, Knowledge Translation

LAURIE SMITH Research Program Manager

NICOLA ST-ONGE Research Projects Manager

CANDICE TAGUIBAO Digital Health Manager

MELODY TSAI Research Project Assistant

SORAYA UTOKAPARCH Finance Administrator

MARKETA WALDRUM Research Manager

MELISSA WATT Research Coordinator

ADRIANNA XUE Research Assistant

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whri\_cwbc@cw.bc.ca www.whri.org 4500 Oak Street Vancouver, BC, Canada 604-875-3459





@womensresearch



