

WOMEN'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
AT BC WOMEN'S



# Annual Report

2021-2022



Provincial Health  
Services Authority



# 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 see 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 [Seventh Annual Women's Health Research Symposium](#) as a **hybrid virtual and in-person event with close to 200 attendees**, marking the first in-person 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."





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.



**Digital Health Research Innovation  
Series Presented by BCCHR and WHRI**

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

**INDUSTRY PARTNER PANEL: TEAM UP, APPLY FOR  
FUNDING, IMPROVE PATIENT CARE**



**Amos Adler**  
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT  
MEMOTEXT



**Marina Pavlovic**  
CO-FOUNDER & CEO  
ELI HEALTH



**David Helliwell**  
CO-FOUNDER  
THRIVE HEALTH



**Ania Wysocka**  
FOUNDER  
ROOTD



**Marc Fiume**  
CO-FOUNDER & CEO  
DNASTACK

WOMEN'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
AT BC WOMEN'S





BC  
Children's  
Hospital  
Research Institute



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

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.





**A publication 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 in 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 double-blinded 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 ...

---

1006

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

6% increase in research publications over the previous year  
\*97% peer-reviewed

47.2

## MILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDING

24% increase in external research funding over the previous year

984

## RESEARCH TRAINEES

20% increase learners supervised by our investigators over the previous year

465

## INVESTIGATORS

16% increase in our provincial network of researchers over the previous year

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 ...

---

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.

UPDATED JAN 11, 2023



# Our people

## WHRI Executive

DR. LORI BROTT  
*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*

IANNA FOLKES  
*Research Assistant*

DR. ULRIKE MAYER  
*Statistical Assistant*

TALOR SACRE  
*Research Assistant*

DR. ARIANNE ALBERT  
*Senior Biostatistician*

SHANNON GARNETT  
*Executive Assistant*

NADIA MITHANI  
*Research Project Manager*

DR. STEPHANIE SKOURTES  
*Manager, Knowledge  
Translation*

JANICE ANDRADE  
*Research Manager*

SHANLEA GORDON  
*Research Manager*

CHARITY MUDHIKWA  
*Research Assistant*

LAURIE SMITH  
*Research Program Manager*

AREZOU AZAMPANAH  
*Research Coordinator*

ISABELLE GOUIN  
*Research Assistant*

CAROLA MUÑOZ  
*Research Projects Manager*

NICOLA ST-ONGE  
*Research Projects  
Manager*

SATTHA BEHEROZE  
*Research Laboratory  
Coordinator*

ISABELLE KORCHINSKI  
*Research Assistant*

MELISSA NELSON  
*Communications  
Coordinator*

AMY BOOTH  
*Research Coordinator*

ANIRUDH KOTLO  
*Research Coordinator*

HEATHER NOGA  
*Research Projects  
Manager*

CANDICE TAGUIBAO  
*Digital Health Manager*

TRAVIS BOULTER  
*Research Coordinator*

ERIC LUSSIER  
*Research Development  
Facilitator*

ZAHRA PAKZAD  
*Research Manager*

MELODY TSAI  
*Research Project Assistant*

EMMA BRANCH  
*Research Data Analyst*

EVELYN MAAN  
*Senior Research Manager*

KIRAN PARMAR  
*Research Assistant*

SORAYA UTOKAPARCH  
*Finance Administrator*

AMBER CAMPBELL  
*Research Coordinator*

FRANNIE MACKENZIE  
*Research Coordinator*

NICOLE PRESTLEY  
*Manager, Research +  
Knowledge Translation*

MARKETA WALDRUM  
*Research Manager*

VICTORIA CARRIQUIRIBORDE  
*Research Assistant*

JESSICA MADDOX  
*Research Assistant*

TIFFANY REEVE  
*Research Manager*

MELISSA WATT  
*Research Coordinator*

DR. KATHRYN DEWAR  
*Senior Research Manager*

TIANNA MAGEL  
*Research Assistant*

STEPHEN RISTOW  
*Research Project Assistant*

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