

# UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY



# ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

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REPORT FROM THE

## DEPARTMENT HEAD

Dr. Geoffrey W. Cundiff, MD, FACOG, FACS, FRCPSC  
Professor, Head and Dr. Victor Gomel Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology,  
Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology,  
University of British Columbia

Departments, like bridges, require strong foundations to reach their targets. The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology benefits from the solid foundation built by the department's founding leaders and faculty members. Some of these leaders are commemorated in endowed programs and professorships, such as the Fred Bryans Faculty Research Forum, Fred Bryans Master Teachers Program and Dr. Victor Gomel Professorship. These endowments are invaluable to achieving our mission, yet there are many other unrecognized forerunners whose work continues to have a positive impact on our department.

The passing of these pioneers, while inevitable, is a source of sadness, and this year has been sadder than most. Dr. Lou Benedet, former Head of the Department and the Division of Gynaecologic Oncology passed away in March. We lost another Oncology colleague in August with the passing of Dr. Ken Swenerton. And we also lost the irreplaceable, Dr. David Boyes.

This year marks the 42nd Annual Meeting of the D.A. Boyes Society Meeting. The Society was founded in 1974 by colleagues and protégés of Dr. Boyes as a way to honour him for his contributions not only to their careers, but to women's health. At the time, Dr. Boyes remarked that such honours should be reserved for deceased colleagues, and yet he attended the meeting himself for the next 42 years. Over this time, this venue has evolved into an inimitable forum for education, knowledge translation, and fellowship of colleagues across British Columbia. It also helps to remind us of Dr. Boyes' unique contributions to our specialty and women's health globally.

Dr. David Boyes was a visionary researcher who, as a resident working with Dr. H.K. Fidler, recognized the value of the Pap smear to diagnose early cervical

cancer. He also believed that a clinical trial to prove this was unethical, so instead, they developed the first organized program in the world to screen for cervical cancer. By 1960, cervical screening was available to all women in BC over the age of 20 years. The program, which led to a decline of over 70% in incidence and mortality of cervical cancer, was the most successful population-screening program worldwide and remains a model for cancer control. This transfer of basic science findings to population health is also one of the earliest examples of translational research, now a principal aspiration of the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

Diagnosing cervical cancer was futile without an effective treatment so, Dr. Boyes, along with Dr. Michael Turko, developed the cone biopsy as a means to remove the abnormal cells detected at the Pap smear. He travelled worldwide demonstrating the methodology, but was especially well received by his colleagues in British Columbia for his generosity in spreading this knowledge to physicians in communities around the province. In this sense, Dr. Boyes was also a pioneer in knowledge translation.

In an effort to recognize his pioneering efforts in training physicians, knowledge translation, and translational research, the D.A. Boyes Society developed two new awards this year; the D.A. Boyes Community Education Award, and the D.A. Boyes Research Award (page 4). With these awards we hope to further cultivate these traits in our present faculty members. We have also arranged this report to highlight Dr. Boyes' legacy. As you look through the report you will find stories of people and programs that build on his example in *Educating Future Generations, Facilitating Knowledge Translation, and Realizing Translational Research*. These remain strong undercurrents in all that we do.

## *OUR MISSION*

We are the nexus that unites the province of British Columbia for quality and innovation in care, education, and discovery to optimize the health of women.

### **Dr. David A. Boyes -1925-2017**

The BC and UBC flags were lowered on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 in remembrance of Dr. David Boyes.

Dr. David Boyes, former Head of the BC Cancer Agency, along with Dr. H.K. Fidler, developed the first organized program in the world to screen for cervical cancer. By 1960, thanks to his pioneering efforts in training physicians and technologists in the program and promoting it to women, cervical screening became available free of charge to every woman in BC over the age of 20 years. The program led to a decline of over 70% in incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. It was the most successful population screening program anywhere in the world and remains a model for cancer control.



In addition, Dr. Boyes, along with Dr. Michael Turko, was the first in the world to develop the cone biopsy method of investigating and removing the abnormal cells detected through the Pap smear examination. He traveled throughout the world demonstrating the methodology to physicians.

Furthermore, Dr. Boyes was one of the first to take research directly to the patient's bedside, a system now an integral part of the BC Cancer Agency's mandate and known as translational research.

During his 27 years with the BC Cancer Agency, from 1960 to 1987, Dr. Boyes built the Agency into a world-class centre. Under his leadership, the BC Cancer Agency developed the tumour-group team model, as well as a standardized treatment policy manual for each tumour group, for use by all physicians in BC. Dr. Boyes has been recognized globally for his research and teaching. Closer to home, a group of gynaecologists and oncologists formed the illustrious "David Boyes Society", which meets annually to discuss various oncology topics.

## **Dr. Kenneth Swenerton - 1946-2017**

A compassionate physician, Ken practised medical oncology at the BC Cancer Agency from 1974 to 2011. He was also an active member of the Gynaecologic Oncology team and active in the Society of Gynaecologic Oncology of Canada (GOC). Ken believed, lived, and represented the true values of GOC: collegiality, collaboration, friendship, sharing, cultivating the new generation, and growing together. He obtained the Presidential Medal in 2006 for his immense accomplishments in the field of gynaecologic oncology in Canada. He promoted the integration of medical oncologists to become full members of GOC. He also influenced the treatment of gynaecological cancers and research at local and international levels; however, it was in providing direct patient care that Ken will be fondly remembered for his empathy, intellectual curiosity, mentorship, and deep commitment to addressing the person before the disease. His good humour and generosity will be sadly missed.



## **Dr. Lou Benedet - 1941-2017**



Dr Benedet was a native of British Columbia and received his medical degree from UBC in 1966. After specialized training in England and California, he began an accomplished career in Gynaecological Oncology as a Professor in our Department, and as a provincial director at the BC Cancer Agency. As a researcher, he made major contributions to the fight against cervical cancer, and he was invited to many countries around the world to assist in setting up screening programs. As an author of over 100 scientific articles and a skilled cancer surgeon, his contributions to the health of his patients and to women's health worldwide were immeasurable.

*In honor, and memory, of Dr. David Alexander Boyes, the D. A. Boyes Society, announces:*

*D.A. Boyes Community Education Award*

This inaugural Community Teaching Award highlights Dr. Boyes' lifetime commitment to teaching and engagement of the medical communities of British Columbia. This annual award will be bestowed to a community within British Columbia or Yukon that shows exceptional commitment toward Undergraduate and/or Resident education in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In addition to the public recognition, the community will be eligible for a financial grant up to \$5000, towards sponsoring a Visiting Lectureship and/or Mentorship by an expert of the community's choice.

*D.A. Boyes Research Award*

This award provides funding for hypothesis testing proposals not eligible for funding at the national level. Examples include clinical projects without a basic science component, projects for which there is a hypothesis but no preliminary data, and smaller circumscribed projects that cannot be expanded into a 3 year CIHR-type proposal. This grant is open to all learners within the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and will provide a single non-renewable \$50,000 grant. Outcomes will be presented at a future DA Boyes Clinical Review meeting.



# Educating Future Generations

The Undergraduate Program for the Faculty of Medicine initiated a new curriculum in 2015. This had a major impact on the responsibilities of our Department's Undergraduate Medical Education Program, which provides oversight for the medical students curriculum related to reproductive health in women. This includes in the first 2 years and a clerkship in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for year 3. We also offer a number of elective rotations related to women's health for year 4.



*Dr. Sarah J. Finlayson,  
Program Director, MDUG*

## *Implementation of Undergraduate Curriculum Renewal*

Beginning in 2015, we welcomed undergraduate students at the UBC Faculty of Medicine into a renewed curriculum. Those students (the class of 2019!) successfully completed the first 2 foundational science years and were thrilled to move from the classroom to the bedside in June 2017. We were challenged to align our 3rd year focus with the groundwork learning that had taken place in Years 1 and 2. The years leading up to the launch of the renewed clerkship curriculum were spent exploring the best content, structure, evaluation and assessment strategies to renew our OBGYN Clerkship. Oh the meetings!

We launched into our first new Clerkship rotation on June 5th, 2017. The Clerkship year is now four '12 week' blocks. Our 6 week OBGYN Clerkship is housed within the 12 week Women and Children's Block. Students are longitudinally assessed throughout the 6 weeks, and also with real-time Workplace Based Assessments, Portfolio and a summative end of block MCQ exam. We champion their clinical time and only take students away from seeing patients for one half-day a week. During this academic time, we have a formal interactive curriculum that highlights clinical topics essential to OBGYN. We integrated important themes such as Professionalism, Social Determinants of Health, Global Health, Sexuality, Special Populations, Complementary and Alternative Therapies, Medical Ethics, and Patient Safety.

Once the first iteration of this renewed clerkship was formalized, we worked to build our in-house assessment tools—the MCQ bank and new OSCE questions. These assessment items needed to align with the material we were emphasizing and teaching. As anyone who has written "modern" MCQ questions knows, this is no simple task!

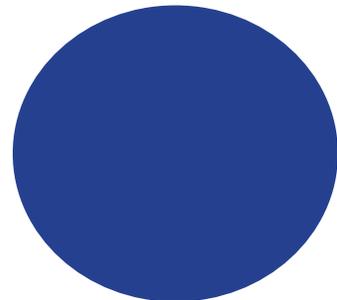
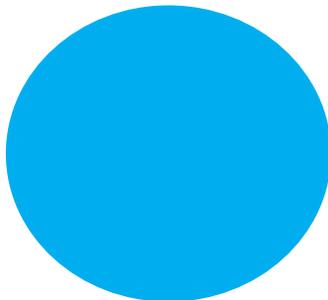
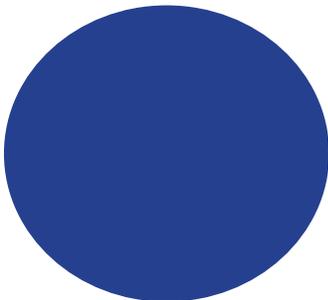
*Education Champions Realize Renewal of Clerkship*

The OBGYN Clerkship is delivered throughout our Province in VFMP, NMP, SMP and IMP. Many individuals work daily (and nightly!) with our medical students to give them an incredible clinical experience. We know how important early clinical mentorship is for inspiring future OBGYNs—the students’ time with us on OBGYN clerkship will influence their career choice and future attitudes. I am thrilled when a student emails me after their rotation to say they are thinking about joining our profession! This reinforces that we are all doing a great job. Kudos to our Province-Wide network of mentors and educators.

While each individual who works with Medical students deserves our gratitude and thanks, I want to pay special tribute to a small group of doctors that chose to go above and beyond. None of that renovation and re-development of the clerkship could have happened without the enthusiastic and generous contributions of our core Undergraduate Team. This development work was not remunerated and required time away from clinical work and personal time. These doctors were instrumental in advocating for an amazing, balanced and inspiring clerkship.

If you see these folks, please give them a high five for a job well done and appreciated. We couldn’t have done it without them and I am forever grateful.

**Dr. Chelsea Elwood**  
**Dr. Hannah Ezzat**  
**Dr. Jason Hitkari**  
**Dr. Murette Lee**  
**Dr. Justin McGinnis**  
**Dr. Tracy Pressey**  
**Dr. Sarah Saunder**  
**Dr. Niamh Tallon**  
**Dr. Beth Taylor**  
**Dr. Nicole Todd**



## Residency Program

The Residency program is a 5 year program that takes 8 residents per year.

### *Resident Bootcamp: Novel Approach Builds Solid Foundations*



*Dr. Jagdeep Ubhi, Program Director,  
OBGYN Residency Program*

In the past, medical education in residency involved an internship (or rotating year) in the first 12 months. The residents were subsequently thrown into the deep end with General Obstetrics and Gynaecology with a hope that they will develop the skills as they saw patients. The idea was to develop these skills “on the fly”. The theory was see one, do one, teach one as outlined in the book “House of God”. This year I thought that we should give the residents the skills to perform their duties prior to starting the 2nd year, thus was the genesis of the OBGYN Bootcamp.

The entire month of June 2017 was dedicated the boot camp. The goal of the boot-camp was to enhance residents’ readiness and make the entry into PGY2 rotations at BC Women’s, Vancouver General, St. Paul’s and Royal Columbian Hospitals as seamless as possible.

The boot-camp was designed with input from the PGY2 to PGY5 residents to focus on key tasks. Each weekday residents had a mix of peer tutoring with hands-on simulation with Friday and Saturday call at one of the four PGY2 hospitals with a senior resident.

We took advantage of local simulation centres for the boot-camp. The Centre of Excellence for Surgical Education and Innovation (CESEI) was used for gynaecologic surgery simulations in Laparoscopy and Hysterectomy. The BC Women’s Hospital Simulation Centre was used for obstetric simulations, including fetal health surveillance, assisted delivery using forceps and vacuum, management of breech and shoulder dystocia, some low-tech simulations were also used at the Diamond Health Care Centre – including suturing with fake skin and an anatomy lab including building a pelvis from clay.

Intrinsic roles were also included as part of the boot-camp such as OR etiquette, Resident Wellness and Quality Improvement, Patient Safety as well as Resource Management.

Overall the boot-camp was very well received and we feel it was well worth the intensive effort. A small team of residents, led by Dr. Neeraj Mehra, plan to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the boot-camp.



## **FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Fariba Mohtashami**

Dr. Mohtashami is a community Obstetrician Gynaecologist based at Langley Hospital who has completed a fellowship in Advanced Minimally Invasive Surgery. She is very passionate about medical education in particular, surgical education for residents. She is involved in surgical coaching and mentoring for physicians in practice.

She has been heard to say, “How many c-sections do the resident have to do? They should be doing more gyne”. While in reality the answer is not straightforward, she does have a point especially considering reduced OR times, a reduction in the number of hysterectomies overall and a changing practice pattern of physicians in the core education sites in Vancouver.

As a personal mission to improve gynaecological surgical exposure for residents, Dr. Mohtashami developed an elective that is now in high demand. She consistently takes residents in every block, training the residents and improving their surgical skills, improving resident comfort and confidence in surgery and thus advocating for gynecologic surgery in the residency. She is also very active in simulation with active participation in the dry lab with laparoscopic skills including suturing, as well as in the animal lab, expanding on a curriculum that is competency based. She is active in the AAGL and is internationally sought after as a teacher. She recently completed an anatomy cadaver lab at the UBC campus. The lab involved a stellar international cast of physicians and was well attended by OBGYNs in practice as well as residents. As a result of all her effort, she was awarded the APOG (Association of Professors of Obstetrics and Gynaecology) award in Toronto in December 2016.



## Sowing the Seeds of Tomorrow's Researchers in Obstetrics & Gynaecology



*Dr. K.S. Joseph,  
Associate Head, Research*

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has great expectations for Resident Research and attempts to provide every resident with a research experience that is inspiring, educational, and which will contribute to the scientific literature in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In fact, the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at UBC has a long tradition of successful Resident Research: the inspiration for British Columbia's cervical cancer screening program, which was the first organized program in the world to screen for cervical cancer, came from a Resident Research project undertaken by Dr. D.A. Boyes.

Resident Research in the Department is

facilitated by engaging residents early in their training and emphasizing the value and role of front line clinicians in identifying and answering questions of clinical relevance. In addition, Residents are provided with an introduction to the tools and resources needed to conduct research.

The Resident Research Orientation for first year Residents was held in June 2017. This full day event was part of the month-long Resident Boot-camp designed by Residency Program Director, Dr Jag Ubhi (see page 7). The Orientation provided residents with an overview of research methods and resources to support the completion of the Resident Research Project. Members of the Department and invited speakers presented sessions on research ethics, literature review and library resources, critical appraisal, epidemiologic principles, biostatistical methods, publication, and knowledge translation.

The Research Orientation Day began with a discussion on the importance of clinical research led by Dr. Jag Ubhi and Dr. Geoffrey Cundiff. Dr. Cundiff also presented a succinct and useful overview of biostatistics for clinicians.

## Sowing the Seeds of Tomorrow's Researchers in Obstetrics & Gynaecology

Dr. Gillian Hanley and Dr. K.S. Joseph then provided brief sessions on study design/types, regression analysis, confounding and adjustment, and critical appraisal. These sessions were intended to serve as a review of fundamental research concepts. Other presentations, such as a session on obtaining ethics approval by Ariadna Fernandez and Nikki Koenig, were of a more practical nature and took the Residents through the formal requirements needed prior to initiating a research project. Dr. Timothy Rowe (long time Editor of the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada and 2017 recipient of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada's Distinguished Service Award), discussed issues related to publishing research papers, and Dr. Lori Brotto (Director, Women's Health Research Institute) addressed knowledge translation issues. We also had three guest presenters – Helen Brown OBGYN Subject Librarian from the UBC Woodward Library discussed library resources and accessing the literature, and Dr. Kathryn Dewar and Dr. Arianne Albert provided an overview of the biostatistical and other resources available to Residents from the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI).

Connecting Residents with local supports and resources was an important objective of the Research Orientation Day. Residents were introduced to the Department's Research

Managers (Nikki Koenig at St. Paul's Hospital, Yvonne Erskine at the Vancouver General Hospital and Ariadna Fernandez at the BC Women's Hospital), key staff at the WHRI (Dr. Arianne Albert, Biostatistician and Dr. Kathryn Dewar, Senior Research Manager) and the Resident Research Advisory Committee (Drs. Lori Brotto, Mark Carey, Leanne Dahlgren, Roxana Geoffrion, K.S. Joseph, Janet Lyons, and Paul Yong). A Resident Research Handbook which was developed specifically for the Research Orientation Day as a companion resource was posted on the One45 website for all residents to access.

Resident feedback following the session was very positive. The Resident Orientation Day is the first step of a program and we will be connecting with Residents on a continual basis throughout the year, with activities such as Resident Academic Half-day scheduled for November 2017 (when Residents will present research in progress) and Resident Academic Day scheduled for March 2018 (when Residents will present their completed projects).

We look forward to orienting the new residents at the 2019 Resident Research Orientation Day.

## New Family Planning Program First in Canada

First we had the Ryan Residency Program, dedicated to teaching Family Planning to Obstetrics and Gynaecology residents. This program, started 10 years ago, was unique in Canada at the time, and established our Department as Canadian leaders in Family Planning Education. Now, in that same tradition, we have the Advanced Training Program in Family Planning, the first sub-specialty training program in Canada. There are 30 similar programs in the United States

The Family Planning Fellowship at UBC is now in its second year. We currently have two fellows, Dr. Roopan Gill and Dr. Brigid Dineley, who are both graduates of Canadian OB/GYN residency programs. Dr. Gill already had her MPH and Dr. Dineley will be starting her MHS this fall. In August we are conducting interviews for our third fellow and had many applicants who wanted to join our program.

UBC has the honour of being one of the latest of 30 fellowship sites. We have the privilege of being the only site located outside of the U.S. This is not a Royal College program in Canada and is therefore an advanced training program. The curriculum and evaluation structure is very similar to an accredited ABOG or Royal College fellowship - in anticipation of this becoming an official sub-specialty.

The "Fellowship in Family Planning" is a two-year fellowship focused on subspecialty training in research, teaching and clinical practice in abortion and contraception. Fellows receive training in clinical and epidemiologic research, develop clinical and teaching skills and are expected to either obtain a Masters in Health Science or a Master's in Public Health. The fellowship is fully funded by an Anonymous donor and is coordinated at University of California San Francisco at the Bixby Centre for Global Reproductive Health. Fellows are expected to conduct and publish a major research project over the two year fellowship as well as complete their clinical and research training. There is very much an international community in the fellowship and our trainees have access to many

courses and educational opportunities. This past year, Dr. Gill was sponsored to spend a month in New York to work with the Population Council and participate in their research. This winter she will be sponsored to spend 6 weeks in Geneva with the WHO working on contraception and abortion research and guidelines. We are fortunate that the Fellowship has such a supportive structure and benefactor that allows our fellows to have such opportunities.

With the start of our fellowship - we needed a research committee to help guide the fellows' research, so in July 2016 we started the Family Planning Research steering committee, which is housed in BC Women's at the WHRI. This committee helps young investigators in our field plan and implement research projects and is helping to expand our local research in Family Planning. The fellowship not only pays for fellows to obtain an MPH or MHS; they also receive funding for their research projects which is to be presented and published at the end of their final year.

We are grateful for the community of clinical and academic faculty who have helped support our training program. Clinical faculty in the CARE Program are all involved in teaching the fellows, as well as Drs. Nicole Todd, Mohammed Bedaiwy, Wendy Norman and Gina Ogilvie, among others. This year - our fellowship has started weekly teaching sessions and we are fortunate to have faculty from other departments help with our educational mandate. As an example, Dr. Judith Soon from the school of Pharmacy will be teaching our trainees during one of these sessions.

We hope that in the coming years we will have more involvement with other faculty as the fellowship evolves. Nicole Prestley from WHRI has also been instrumental in helping to guide our fellows' research and we are grateful for her guidance and involvement.

## *Postgraduate Education Programs*

In addition to the Residency Program, which offers specialty training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, the Department has Fellowship Programs and Advanced Training Programs to provide additional postgraduate training in sub-specialties.

### Fellowship in Gynaecologic Oncology

This Royal College accredited program has a two-year curriculum covering diagnosis and treatment of female reproductive cancers, including surgical and nonsurgical management. We offer the benefits of a large clinical volume consisting of the entire province of British Columbia and the Yukon, with a catchment population of over 4.6 million. The program strongly encourages an additional year of academic training to allow our fellows to develop a specialized skillset and have the time to pursue an area of interest, so that they can be competitive in finding a position in an academic centre.

Our fellows' experience is unique in Canada in that they are actively involved in provincial guideline development.

It is a highly competitive program with an unprecedented 10 applications from across Canada and around the world for the 2018-19 academic year. Fellows completing the program continue to be academically productive and successful. Dr. Annick Pina completed her training at the end of June and is now working at the Centre Hospitalier de l'Universite de Montreal (CHUM). Her research project during her fellowship was on mismatch repair deficiency in endometrial cancer, and it was awarded best oral paper and the "People's choice award" at the Annual Society of Gynaecologic Oncology meeting in Ottawa in June 2017.

Dr. Lily Proctor is now in her 2nd year of clinical training. She is currently working on a Masters degree in Public Health from Harvard. She received a grant from the American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology to conduct a trial evaluating anal cytology in women with high-grade vulvar dysplasia, and she will present this in Las Vegas in 2018.

Dr. Shaina Lee just started her 1st year of clinical training. She is also working towards a Masters degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins.



*Dr. Janice S. Kwon, Program Director,  
Gynaecologic Oncology Fellowship  
Program*

## Fellowship in Maternal Fetal Medicine



*Dr. Francine Tessier, Program Director*

This Royal College accredited program has a two-year curriculum covering diagnosis and treatment in perinatology.

Our 2-year program is in great shape and continues to attract the best candidates from across the country. Our current trainees include Dr. Sarah Coad, completed her Ob/Gyn Residency at UBC and joined us in October 2015. She will complete her subspecialty training in February 2018. Jessica Liauw joined us from McMaster University in August 2016. Concurrently with her MFM training, she is enrolled in a 2-year Clinician Investigator Program here at UBC. Krystal van den Heuvel joined the program from Dalhousie University in September 2016.

Looking toward the future, we are preparing for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's Competence by Design implementation, and the new accreditation standards that will follow.



## Fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility

This Royal College accredited program has a two-year curriculum covering diagnosis and treatment of endocrinologic disorders related to reproduction (polycystic ovary syndrome, hypogonadotropic hypogonadism, premature ovarian failure, pituitary dysfunction) including infertility.

The program ranks with the best in the country. The emphasis on excellence in clinical care and academia has led to graduates being recruited to reputable institutions across the country.



*Dr. Jon Havelock, Program Director REI Fellowship*

## Fellowship in Reproductive Infectious Diseases



*Dr. Chelsea Elwood, Fellow*

The Reproductive Infectious Diseases (RID) fellowship is hosted by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and is made possible through highly valued partnerships with the Departments of Medicine (Infectious Diseases), Paediatrics (Infectious Diseases) and Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (Medical Microbiology) and the Women's Health Research Institute.

Dr. Chelsea Elwood is the current Clinical Fellow in the program since September 2016. On entering the fellowship she won two highly competitive prestigious scholarships. The Allen-Carey Scholarship in Women's Health was established in 1998 and is designed to support unique physician training opportunities for specialized education in women's health towards developing future leaders in women's health. She was also awarded a CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network Postdoctoral Fellowship award to study aspects of HIV in women.

Dr. Elwood did a BSc in Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Western Ontario, followed by an MSc at University of Western Ontario supported by an NSERC scholarship studying the vaginal microbiome. She completed her MD at UBC and then her residency in Obstetrics & Gynaecology at UBC. Research conducted in her residency included a project funded by The Western Society of Pelvic Medicine Award in Female Pelvic Floor Research, a Pilot Grant 'Back to basics: a novel approach for improving surgical outcomes with vaginal mesh' which integrated an animal model and human studies to evaluate the role of the vaginal microbiome in surgical outcomes. Of note she has already published 11 peer-reviewed publications, and presented at national and international meetings.

### *Advanced Training Program in Chronic Pelvic Pain*

This unique and innovative one-year program is offered to practicing Canadian gynaecologists who wish to develop an expertise in the assessment and treatment of patients with endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain while developing outstanding laparoscopic skills. The emphasis is on integrated care with a multidisciplinary evaluation and approach in addition to advanced surgical management of complex pelvic disease. Our current trainee is Dr. Claudine Storness-Bliss, who plans to pursue this work in the Fraser Health Care system after she has completed our program. As of next year, this will become a 2-year program to further enhance the surgical skill and academic productivity of our trainees.

### *Advanced Training Program in Family Planning*

The University of British Columbia Advanced Training in Family Planning is the first in Canada. This program provides post-graduate obstetrician gynaecologists the opportunity to focus on comprehensive family planning training including advanced abortion care and contraception as well as training in research methodologies. It includes both clinical and research training in advanced family planning with the goal of embedding this within a generalist obstetrics and gynaecology practice. Research options span the spectrum from basic to translational to clinical research and pursuit of a Masters degree is encouraged.

### *Advanced Training Program in Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery*

The training program in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS) is a two-year postgraduate program dedicated to cultivating academic leaders in the field. The strength of this program lies in the broad range of available surgical procedures via open abdominal, laparoscopic and vaginal approaches. It includes multi-disciplinary clinical training from urology, colorectal surgery, sexual medicine, radiology and physiotherapy. Academic performance is given equal importance to clinical skill development.

# Reproductive and Developmental Sciences Graduate Program

There are currently 18 PhD and 15 MSc students in the RDS program. They are supervised by basic scientists and clinical researchers and their research covers a wide breadth of areas related to reproduction and reproductive cancers. An MSc project takes 2-3 years to complete, while the normal duration of a PhD project is 4-5 years.



*Dr. Dan Rurak, Professor Emeritus*

## *The Breadth of Graduate Student Theses Reflects the Translational Nature of RDS Program*

We highlight 3 PhD students who completed their theses and passed their public defense in the last year.



Marianne Vidler was supervised by Dr. Peter von Dadelszen in her project on community experiences of pregnancy and pregnancy complications, particularly related to hypertensive disorders of pregnancy in developing countries. This was a qualitative research project, which involved a systemic literature review and meta-analysis of published studies of community perceptions of hypertensive disorders and qualitative analysis of structured focus groups comprising pregnant women and care-givers in Nigeria, Mozambique, India and Pakistan. The rationale for studying these particular communities is the high risk of maternal and fetal mortality associated with hypertensive disorders in these developing countries. Overall the results showed significant knowledge gaps on the hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, which were strongly influenced by cultural differences among the communities. These knowledge gaps must be addressed if pregnant women suffering from a hypertensive disorder are to seek appropriate maternal care. So far this research has resulted in 14 published articles. Marianne's career plans are to continue with qualitative research in pregnancy

Haolong Li completed his PHD under the supervision of Dr. Xuesen Dong. His research involved study of the role of UDP-glucuronosyltransferase 2B17 (UGT2B17) in the progression of castration-resistant prostate cancer. UGT2B17 is an enzyme that catabolizes androgen receptor agonists to inactive metabolites, and whose expression is increased following anti-androgen treatment. Using cultured cells and mouse xenograft models of prostate cancer, Haolong demonstrated that this enzyme, via activating c-Src kinase, contributes to the reestablishment of androgen receptor signaling, thereby enhancing castration-resistant prostate cancer progression. Thus pharmacologic suppression of this pathway may suppress progression. So far this research has resulted in 5 published papers. Haolong will be leaving Vancouver in September to embark on post-doctoral training at the University of California, San Francisco.



Lesley Hill was supervised by Dr. Geoff Hammond. Her thesis project involved corticosteroid-binding globulin (CBG), a molecule that transports biologically active glucocorticoids, and thus determines their bioavailability and also delivers the glucocorticoids to sites of inflammation. Lesley investigated the biochemical consequences of single nucleotide polymorphism in the CBG gene and found that these were associated with abnormal function of the gene, which could affect plasma glucocorticoid concentrations. She also studied CBG in patients in the ICU with a variety of illnesses and found reduced CBG levels associated with inflammation with the lowest levels in individuals with severe inflammation. In a rat model of inflammation, low CBG levels were associated with an increased susceptibility to inflammation. Together, the human and rodent studies highlight the importance of CBG in inflammatory reactions and suggest that CBG is a useful biomarker of inflammation onset and severity. To date, this research has resulted in 7 published papers. Lesley plans to work with Dr. Hammond for a year, while applying to medical school.

These are just 3 examples of the bright and talented graduate students in the RDS Program. It is a pleasure to work with them.

## Facilitating Knowledge Translation

### *Women's Health Research Institute Provides Exemplary Model of Collaboration Between Academy, Hospital, and Foundation*

The Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) is a leading academic women's and newborn health research centre embedded within the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre. As both an actual research institute supporting all of the research activities in the acute and ambulatory programs at BCWH as well as a virtual research institute that provides support to many women's health researchers across BC, the WHRI is one of only two Canadian research institutes devoted to furthering research excellence in women's health. The WHRI was constituted in 2005 and established in 2006, marking October 2016 as its ten year anniversary!

**Dr. Deborah Money** was the inaugural Executive Director, and shepherded the WHRI from a one and a half room venture with a few local members to what it is today: a well-respected institute of 173 members, recognized nationally and internationally, and which works collaboratively with other research enterprises that has led to a fundamental culture shift for research on the Oak Street campus. In July 2016, **Dr. Lori Brotto** was named the new Executive Director of the WHRI to continue the outstanding foundations laid by Dr. Money. Guided by the WHRI mission, **“Creating new knowledge and evidence-based solutions that inform and transform the health and health care of women and their families”**, and together with excellent WHRI staff and students, the WHRI has made significant progress on the institute's objectives. To highlight some of those activities:



*Dr. Deborah Money, Executive Vice Dean*



### *2nd Annual Symposium on Women's Health Research*

**Enhanced Collaboration: To support an environment that promotes success for women's health research in BC.** The WHRI has increased our membership by 23% since 2016 by recruiting women's health researchers from all Health Authorities. Funded by a Michael Smith Foundation Convening and Collaborating Grant, the WHRI has created a broad network of women's health researchers across all BC institutions and health authorities. Our second annual WHRI Symposium took place in April 2017 at The UBC Nest and was a fantastic opportunity to showcase some of BC's talent in women's health research and to provide opportunities for collaboration. They also presented to the Residents in the UBC Ob/Gyn program, outlining the supports provided by the WHRI, which include biostatistical advice and activities. Because the WHRI is committed to investing in the future of women's health research, they have an active mentorship program, and currently have 401 trainees supervised by WHRI members. They have also solidified an excellent working relationship with the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, identifying areas for integration.

**To increase capacity for women's health research in BC.** Securing national funding for women's health is exceptionally difficult, and changes in federal budget for science funding has impacted many researchers. With the support of the BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre Foundation, under the new leadership of Genesa Greening, the WHRI has strengthened the relationship with the Foundation, and has been able to award three Catalyst Grants this year to women's health research topics. Over the past year, WHRI members have received \$15.3 million in grant funding. They have recruited Dr. Lisa Galea, a neuroscientist to the WHRI team as a Scientific Advisor. They have hired a part-time grant facilitator to provide pivotal grant development expertise to WHRI members. They have offered a free workshop on Skills in Knowledge Translation Training to WHRI members, and are offering a workshop on Implementation Science in the coming months. Over the past year the WHRI has also been working on developing a Women's Health Research Agenda, to be launched in early 2018, revising themes to better capture the breadth of cross-pillar women's health research carried out by WHRI members.



*Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director of the WHRI, accepts support with members of the BC Women's Hospital Foundation*



## FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Lori Brotto

Dr. Brotto is a clinical psychologist specializing in Reproductive and Sexual Medicine and is best known for her work on female sexual arousal disorder. She is a Professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and holds a joint appointment with the Department of Psychiatry. Her unique international reputation as preeminent investigator in sexual medicine was recently highlighted by the Globe and Mail. Her research focuses on the study of women's sexual health, especially improving the lives of women with sexual health problems for whom existing treatments are inadequate. She introduced the concept of mindfulness based group treatment for disrupted sexual functioning and genital pain and over the past decade has shown that mindfulness based group treatment is effective across different delivery modalities. Her work formed the foundation of the field, but her meteoric rise and unique success as an investigator also reflects her ability to go beyond knowledge creation through the deft use of knowledge translation. Dr. Brotto's trade book which focuses on translating the science of mindfulness-based interventions for sexual health in women is in press with Greystone Publishing and will be available in early 2018.



Dr. Brotto's knowledge dissemination projects have directly impacted standard care in two academic hospital centres at the University of British Columbia and have been disseminated through over 160 peer-reviewed publications, a co-edited book, 8 treatment manuals, and nearly 200 conference and workshop presentations. Her involvement with social media extends from interviews with national and international television (CTV, Global, Fox News, Discovery Channel) and radio shows (CBC Radio, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, National Public Radio), to podcasts and online news stories (including several interviews with the New York Times). She even led a Team grant from the CIHR focused on methods to expand knowledge translation. This unique expertise in knowledge translation is one of the attributes that makes her excellent in the role of Executive Director of the WHRI. Recently Dr. Brotto was awarded the 2017 Excellence in Research Award from The Association of Academic Professionals in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

## Department Members Bring International Congresses to Vancouver

### *World Congress on Endometriosis*



The 13th World Congress on Endometriosis took place at the Vancouver Convention Center in May of 2017. Led by our very own **Dr. Catherine Allaire**, this year's congress attracted 1100 delegates from 58 different countries and over 400 abstracts were presented. **Dr. Mohamed Bedaiwy** was the Scientific Program chair and the topics presented covered the latest in immunology, genetics, fertility, pain, surgery, medical treatment and complementary therapies with a focus on improving the quality of life for women living with endometriosis.

**The BC Women's Centre for Pelvic Pain and Endometriosis** had numerous presentations and posters sharing their ongoing research. **Dr. Catherine Allaire** presented on the one-year outcomes of the BC Women's Centre for Pelvic Pain and Endometriosis showing that pain catastrophizing may be an area of focus for future research. **Dr. Paul Yong** presented his ground-breaking paper just recently published in the NEJM that found cancer-causing mutations in non-cancerous endometriosis. **Dr. Christina Williams** presented a poster on her research into ethnicity and endometriosis. **Holly Yager**, clinical counsellor for the BC Women's Centre presented an oral and a poster on mental health issues in women with pelvic pain and endometriosis. **Dr. Lori Brotto**, Executive Director of the WHRI, was one of many keynote lecturers and discussed the impact of sexual dysfunction for women living with endometriosis.

There were many Pre-Congress courses, which were a very popular addition to the Congress. A patient friendly pre-congress course, chaired by **Dr. Paul Yong**, featured one of the speakers BC Women's Centre physiotherapist **Susannah Britnell**. The course provided patients with tools for improving their quality of life and facilitating advocacy. A Meet and Mingle luncheon sponsored by BC Women's Hospital allowed patients to mingle with the world's leading endometriosis researchers.

By all measures and from feedback received, this was the most successful World Congress yet! For more highlights of the Congress visit #WCE2017 on twitter or [endometriosis.ca](http://endometriosis.ca)



**Fundraising Run** Following Dr. Allaire's vision of collaborative care, the 13th World Congress on Endometriosis not only featured the first patient focused pre-congress course, but also organized the first ever Congress Fundraising Run for Endometriosis, which attracted 130 participants including delegates, patients and their families and friends.

## 42nd Congress of the International Urogynaecologic Association

Urogynaecologists, urologists, gynaecologists, physiotherapists, nurses and scientists from around the world met in Vancouver in late June for the **42nd Congress of the International Urogynecologic Association**. The meeting opened on June 24th, during the Canadian celebration of Aboriginal Day, which was marked by a ceremony led by members of the Squamish Nation.

The meeting, which drew more than 1,000 attendees, included workshops, a live surgery session, state-of-the-art lectures, panel discussions, and debates, on current and controversial topics, as well as the presentation of original research. The Local Organizing Committee, chaired by **Dr. Geoff Cundiff**, included department members, **Dr. David Quinlan, Dr. Roxana Geoffrion, Dr. May Sanaee, and Dr. Lynn Stothers**. By all accounts, the meeting was a tremendous success.

The meeting also offered an excellent venue to highlight members of the UBC Department. This included State of the Art lectures by **Drs. Deborah Money, Lynn Stothers, Andrew McNab, Kelsey Mills, and Geoff Cundiff**. Department members who presented current research, included **Drs. Sarka Lisonkova, Giulia Muraca, Chelsea Elwood, Lynn Stothers, Sarah Houlihan, and Geoff Cundiff**. **Drs. May Sanaee, Roxana Geoffrion, and David Quinlan** served as session moderators.

Because the meeting attracted the majority of Canadians practicing Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, we took advantage of the setting to hold the inaugural meeting of a new Canadian Society of Pelvic Medicine, created to further the discipline nationally.



## Division of Gynaecologic Specialties

The Division of Gynaecologic Specialties was created in 2012 in recognition of the diversity of academic activities among faculty who do not fall into one of the traditional streams of the existing divisional structure. The goal in bringing these diverse academicians together into one division was to capitalize on opportunities for mutual collaboration, shared academic motivation, and to create a social presence within the Department. Division members include physicians who have a special interest and academic pursuits in the fields of Sexual Medicine, Endometriosis/Pelvic Pain, Pediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology, Urogynaecology, Infectious Disease, and Family Planning. Our Division members are leaders in these fields at the local, national and international level (see stories)



*Dr. Catherine Allaire, Division Head*

## Division of General Obstetrics & Gynaecology

This is the largest Division of the Department, including Clinician Educators from across the Province. The members of the General Division are committed to excellence in clinical care, continuing professional development, teaching and research in all aspects of women's health.



*Dr. Thom Wroz, Interim Division Head*

The General Division continues to pursue quality improvement and patient safety. This year the Division initiated a project to improve timely access to emergency Cesarean Sections in hospitals across the province, to meet the standard of 30 minutes of "Decision to Incision" time. This study, launched by **Dr. Thom Wroz** and **Dr. Eda Karacebyli** (R4) in Kamloops, is designed to identify barriers to achieving this standard, address them, and provide a template for improvement for other sites in the Province.

As Generalists we continue to provide the bulk of surgical teaching both in the Greater Vancouver area and at many rural sites such as Victoria, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kelowna and Kamloops. We are dedicated to educating Residents, and in 2018 one of the teaching sites will become the inaugural recipient of Excellence in Teaching Award, created in honour of Dr D. A. Boyes. Continuing surgical skill maintenance and improvement remains a priority, as demonstrated by ever increasing rates of minimally invasive hysterectomy across the Province.

# Realizing Translational Research

## *Opportunistic Salpingectomy Program Serves as Global Model*

Lack of success in ovarian cancer control through screening or advances in treatment in the general population has prompted exploration in new avenues of prevention. “Opportunistic” salpingectomy refers to a surgical procedure in women at low-risk/general population risk for developing ovarian cancer who are undergoing pelvic/abdominal surgery for other indications.

We are now five years from the initiation of our campaign in British Columbia (BC) to encourage opportunistic salpingectomy (OS) for the prevention of ovarian cancer. The ovarian cancer prevention campaign was stimulated by robust evidence that the majority of the most common subtype of epithelial ovarian carcinomas (high grade serous) originates in the distal fallopian tube. The two most common ovarian cancer histotypes (clear cell and endometrioid) were shown to originate from endometria that had passed through the fallopian tubes into the peritoneal cavity, implanting on the ovaries themselves. Tubal ligations had been shown to reduce the risk of developing ovarian cancer, and it was believed that removal of the fallopian tubes would reduce risk further. Because many women, over their lifetime undergo gynaecologic procedures in which the fallopian tubes are accessible, there is an opportunity to remove the tubes if child bearing is no longer desired, as a means of decreasing risk of future ovarian cancer. Although the lifetime risk of ovarian cancer in the general population is low, it is a low-risk population that provides the majority of new cases of ovarian cancer. Overall survival rates in ovarian cancer have plateaued, and we have no meaningful means of early detection or screening. Prevention through the removal of the fallopian tubes became a spearhead for action.

In 2010, we sent an educational DVD to all practising gynaecologists in BC and asked them to discuss removal of the fallopian tubes (opportunistic salpingectomy) with their patients planning hysterectomy even if they planned to retain the ovaries, as an option to prevent future ovarian cancer. Similarly, they were asked to consider bilateral salpingectomy as an alternative to tubal ligation for sterilization. We also recommended that all women with high-grade serous carcinomas of the ovary should be referred to the Hereditary Cancer Program to undergo counselling and genetic testing BRCA1/2 mutations in order to offer screening for other BRCA associated cancers in that individual's family members.

The BC Opportunistic Salpingectomy pioneered this population health approach and served as an example for other jurisdictions. This initial campaign was supported by the Society of Gynaecologic Oncologist of Canada with a formal statement in September 2011. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recommend consideration of bilateral salpingectomy in November 2012 and the Society of Gynaecologic Oncology in United States issued a Clinical Practice Statement and guidelines for discussion of bilateral salpingectomy in November 2012. A Committee Opinion from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was generated in January 2015. Today, a search of online journal databases for the term opportunistic salpingectomy yields over 80 relevant publications from at least a dozen countries. In 2014, we published data related to hospital stay, the transfusion, hospital readmissions, and operating times and over 44,000 women soon. Since then other groups have assessed surgical morbidity and found the same reassuring results.

## FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Paul Yong

Paul Yong completed a MD/PhD degree in Experimental Medicine in 2006 and completed Residency in Obstetrics & Gynaecology in 2011 at UBC. He became an Assistant Professor in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Division of Gynaecologic Specialties, in 2012, after completing a fellowship in endometriosis, pelvic pain, and advanced laparoscopic surgery.

To date he has received research funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canadian Foundation for Women's Health, the Women's Health Research Institute, and the University of British Columbia. Paul has also been awarded infrastructure funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation with matching funds from the BC Knowledge Development Fund. In 2015, he obtained the VCHRI Mentored Clinician Scientist Award.

In addition to his stellar research achievements, Dr. Yong provides outstanding clinical and surgical care to chronic pelvic pain, dyspareunia and endometriosis patients. He is the epitome of the true clinician/surgeon-scientist.



### *Department Scientists Find Cancer Causing Mutations in Endometriosis Lesions*

Endometriosis, defined as the presence of ectopic endometrial stroma and epithelium, affects approximately 10% of reproductive-age women and is a primary cause of pelvic pain and infertility. Endometriotic lesions are considered to be benign inflammatory lesions but have cancer like features such as local invasion and resistance to apoptosis. Scientists in our department, **Drs. Paul Yong, Michael Anglesio, and David Huntsman**, in collaboration with researchers at Johns Hopkins found that lesions in deep infiltrating endometriosis, which are associated with virtually no risk of malignant transformation, harbor somatic cancer driver mutations. This study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, has wide implications beyond gynaecologic oncology, as the possibility that mutations usually associated with cancer may not always be so menacing as to cause cancer. The investigators plan further research to determine what puts the brakes on the mutations, especially if there are certain “micro-environments” that hinder the transformation of growths from being merely abnormal to becoming malignant.

## The BC Gynaecologic Cancer Initiative

The BC Gynaecologic Cancer Research team's initiatives are aimed at diving deeper on all fronts of gynaecologic cancer research – the breadth of the mandate reflects our commitment to ensure that all women in every region of the province have equitable and standardized health care that meet their individual needs.

The Gynaecologic Cancer Research Initiative is led by **Dr. Gavin Stuart** and began as a new collaborative between two outstanding research groups in British Columbia:

BC's Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OVCARE) based at the BC Cancer Agency and Vancouver General Hospital, led by **Drs. Dianne Miller** and **David Huntsman**

Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) based at the BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre, led by **Drs. Lori Brotto, Gina Ogilvie** and **Deborah Money**

This new initiative builds upon the transformative research by the team that have led to a number of British Columbia "first"-made solutions which have effected paradigm shifts in our understanding of gynecologic cancers and changes in policy and practice that have impacted the delivery of care for women not only here in British Columbia but around the world.

The team's vision is to strengthen and integrate the expertise, resources and assets across the University and provincial ecosystem to build a comprehensive and translational research strategy – the goal is to eliminate disease and suffering from women's reproductive cancers in BC over the next five decades.

## Division of Gynaecologic Oncology

The Division of Gynaecologic Oncology provides gynaecologic cancer consultation services and treatment to the women of British Columbia. Leadership in cervical cancer screening, as well as diagnosis and treatment of pre-invasive gynaecologic cancer is an important part of the mandate. Most clinical activities occur at the Vancouver General Hospital and at the BC Cancer Agency, where it is the policy of the Gynaecology Tumour Group to try and have all new patients discussed at a Gynaecologic Oncology Disposition Clinic. The Disposition Clinic is video linked with the Vancouver Cancer Centre, Fraser Valley Cancer Centre, Vancouver Island Cancer Centre and the Cancer Centre of the Southern Interior, linking the Division members practicing throughout out the province. This facilitates patient consultation and discussion of difficult clinical problems by this multidisciplinary group. At this clinic, the patient's case is reviewed and treatment decision is made to the patient and the referring physician. Those patients requiring surgery other than radical surgery are referred back to their attending gynaecologist unless it is the physician's desire that the surgery be performed by the Agency consulting staff.

The Gynaecologic Oncology Division also has an internationally recognized research group with multidisciplinary research groups, such as OvCare, a multidisciplinary research program initially dedicated to the eradication of ovarian cancer but now with broader impact.(see story) The combination of a provincial treatment network with strong investigators has led to important advances such as the Opportunistic Salpingectomy. (see story) Efforts to strengthen the clinical and research bonds continue such as the BC Gynaecologic Cancer Initiative (see story).



*Dr. Dianne Miller, Division Head*

## FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Sarka Lisonkova.



*Epidemiologist  
with Expertise in Maternal,  
Fetal, and Neonatal Health Builds  
Translational Research Throughout  
the Department*

Dr. Sarka Lisonkova is the newest tenure track faculty member in the Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine. She first joined our department as a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) funded post-doctoral fellow before being recruited as full-time grant tenure track faculty member in January 2014. In July 2017 Sarka was awarded an MSFHR Scholar Award based on her potential to build a cutting edge research program that makes significant contributions to the field of maternal, fetal and neonatal health; her program is titled “Improving maternal and perinatal health outcomes in high risk mothers”. Her collaborative, team-based approach means that many benefit from her knowledge and expertise, including colleagues in obstetrics, perinatal epidemiology, neonatology, and UBC School of Population and Public Health.

Presently she is working closely with a group of clinicians and researchers in an initiative led by the SOGC and Canadian Perinatal Surveillance System on improving our understanding of maternal mortality and morbidity and preventing adverse health outcomes among pregnant women.

She also collaborates with her departmental colleagues from other divisions, for example, Drs. Geoff Cundiff, Roxana Geoffrion and May Sanaee on a study of obstetric trauma during delivery and its association with pelvic floor disorders later in life; and with Drs. Paul Yong, Christina Williams and Catherine Allaire on projects studying dyspareunia and endometriosis. She also collaborates with members of the Division of Neonatology on a number of studies, for example,

a study of antibiotic resistance in the NICU, or a study on temporal trends in neonatal mortality and severe morbidity following preterm delivery.

Her initial training as a physician and subsequent doctoral degree in epidemiology and biostatistics gives her a strong understanding of the clinical aspect of perinatal research, as well as epidemiological and statistical skills. This is evidenced by the national interest generated by her research; for example, she was first author on a study on maternal morbidity and perinatal outcomes among women in rural versus urban areas of BC published last fall in the CMAJ, which drew a lot of interest and letters to the editor. More recently, her study on maternal age and severe maternal morbidity was published in PloS Medicine which resulted in inquiries from CNN news, CTV news, Globe and Mail

Sarka also contributes to the broader scientific community as is a member of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research (SPER) and as an Associate Assistant Editor for the Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery journal. She serves as ad hoc reviewer for a number of other medical journals. Sarka is a valued member of the Department and an important contributor to women’s health research overall. We look forward to being a part of her career progression and to the advances in the field her research will undoubtedly bring.

## Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine

The Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine is a province wide Division, including 20 perinatologists providing consultative care at 4 sites – BC Women’s Hospital, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital and Victoria General Hospital with outreach to St Paul’s Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital. Division members provide clinical support to maternity care providers throughout the province and into the Yukon Territory through telephone and telehealth consultations, and via coordination of maternal transports. Members of the Division work in close collaboration with specialists in other disciplines including Medical Genetics, Obstetrical Medicine, Neonatology, Pediatric Surgery, Reproductive Mental Health and many others. Care is provided in a collaborative model with the patient’s primary care provider. The interdisciplinary clinic provides patients with the services of perinatal nurses, social workers, dieticians and psychologists. For 2018 and beyond, we are fortunate to be actively hiring and recruiting both clinicians and scientists to the division.

Administratively, the Division shows a strong presence at hospital, university, provincial, national and international levels with key roles in PHSA, SOGC, Royal College, APOG, ISUOG and other key organizations.

Academically the Division excels in teaching, research and academic leadership. Division members are recognized for their teaching acumen, with about half having received teaching awards at the undergraduate, graduate and post graduate levels both locally and abroad. Key educational leadership portfolios are at the undergraduate, graduate and post graduate levels are also held by division members. The divisional research program, is well funded in clinical studies, placental biology, perinatal epidemiology and research investigator/ chair awards. As we build towards the future, we are excited about the possibilities for our division.



*Dr. Ken Lim, Division Head*

## *Strong Program in Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Provides Fertile Ground for Translational Research Program*

The Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility is heavily invested in recurrent pregnancy loss. These services are provided at the BC Women Health Clinic and the Reproductive Medicine Program where valuable clinical, educational and research opportunities are available. **Dr. Mohamed Bedaiwy** with the help of **Dr. Dena Blumenthal** and **Dr. Christina William** provide services and already started a research program linked with the recurrent pregnancy loss clinic.

One of the interesting research projects is to create primary cell line from placentas of ectopic pregnancy. Subsequently, this cell line was used to explore the role of gonadotrophin releasing hormone antagonists as a novel therapy for ectopic Pregnancy. This has been selected by the Scientific Program Committee to receive the Prize Paper (Best Basic Science Oral In-Training) at the Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society in Vancouver September 2017.

### **FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Peter Leung**

We currently have over 50 graduate students, research fellows, technicians and postdoctoral fellows conducting research throughout our research laboratories. I would like to highlight the contributions of Professor Peter Leung. Dr. Peter Leung has an outstanding track record in high quality research in our field. He has been instrumental in maintaining our graduate program over the past 30 years. Most recently, he secured a CIHR Foundation grant in the inaugural national competition. Peter's research goal is to improve the treatment of female reproductive disorders, infertility, disorders of pregnancy and gynecologic cancers by advancing basic and clinical knowledge about the hormonal determinants of women's reproductive health and disease. He aims to develop translational approaches by capitalizing on knowledge gained by addressing inter-related thematic objectives that are important and timely in reproductive medicine. This unique of its kind and timely initiative will address key issues and gaps in the current state of knowledge, and will provide formal interdisciplinary training and educational opportunities for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and clinician scientists in reproductive medicine



## Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility

The Division of Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility strives to achieve excellence in patient care, teaching and research, as these relate to the subspecialty. With respect to Infertility, Division members run four independent Infertility Centres located in three Health Authorities that serve couples from across the Province. The Division is also invested in recurrent pregnancy loss, endometriosis, complex endocrinology and fibroids. These services are provided at The BC Women Health Clinic and the Reproductive Medicine Program where valuable clinical, educational and research opportunities are available.

Historically, the Division has been a clinical and research leader nationally and internationally. This tradition continues with strong translational research programs in gonadotropins, endometriosis and recurrent pregnancy loss. (see stories)



*Dr. Mohamed Bedaiwy, Division Head*

## FACULTY OF PROFILE: Dr. Timothy Rowe

Dr Rowe received his undergraduate medical training at the University of Adelaide in South Australia and his residency training in obstetrics and gynaecology in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, followed by subspecialty training in reproductive medicine at the University of Sydney in Australia. For 35 years, he has been affiliated with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of British Columbia, and was Head of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility until 2013.

At a national level, he has chaired the CPD Committee and the REI Committee of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, chaired the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of APOG, and has been a National Director of the Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society. In 1994 he was appointed Deputy Editor of the SOGC Journal, which in 2001 became the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada (JOGC). From 2005 to 2016, he was Editor-in-Chief of JOGC. During this time he became a founding member of the Crown Initiative, an undertaking now involving the editors of 73 journals of obstetrics and gynaecology; the Initiative's purpose is to develop core outcome sets for research in women's health. In June 2017 he was presented with the Distinguished Service Award by the SOGC "for outstanding contributions and dedication to the promotion of women's health through leadership, collaboration, education, research and advocacy in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology".



*Dr. Timothy Rowe Division of  
Reproductive Endocrinology &  
Infertility*

## UBC Pediatric & Adolescent Gynaecology

Over the past year the U.B.C. Paediatric and Adolescent Gynecology group continues to advance clinical collaboration with our colleagues in an assortment of areas of medical interest. We were delighted to participate in a co-sponsored event this spring to address the subject of “Women with Bleeding Disorders”. The PAG group collaborated with the Pediatric Hematology group at BCCH to provide an exciting Symposium here in Vancouver on March 31 and April 1, 2017.

Dr. John Wu (British Columbia Children’s Hospital Department of Hematology) and Dr. Nicole Todd (U.B.C. Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and B.C.C.H. Division of Paediatric and Adolescent Gynecology) acted as co-chairs for this inspiring CME event. The Symposium was well attended by physicians and nursing practitioners with interests and involvement in managing and treating women with bleeding disorders.



Dr. Andra James was hosted to provide her international expertise in the area of Bleeding Disorders in Women. Dr. James is Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Duke University, North Carolina where she is the founder of the Duke University Women’s Hemostasis and Thrombosis Clinic. The symposium took place on Friday evening March 31 at the Season’s in the Park Restaurant where Dr. James provided a fascinating history of her clinical path in obstetrics involving hematological obstetrics complications and her evolution into this area of subspecialty.

On the following day – Saturday, April 1st, the CME event was comprised of management sessions and case presentations with participatory dialogue from the audience and much motivation for ongoing collaboration among subspecialties. Paediatric and Adolescent Gynecology offers a transitional gynecology clinic at B.C. Women’s Hospital for young women moving on to adult care. We are also supporting a complex contraception clinic for adolescents and young adults with various medical and surgical challenges.

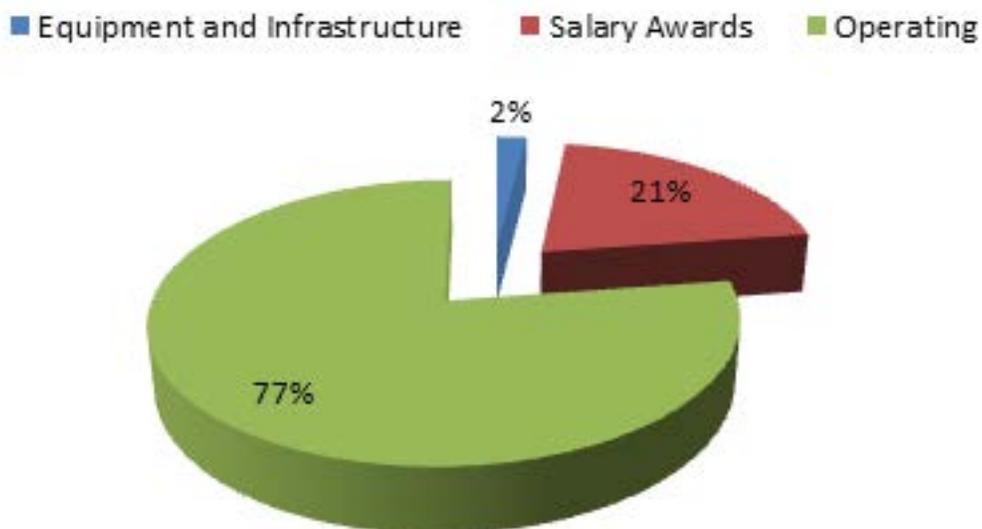
Our ongoing activities provide weekly tertiary referral clinics at B.C.C.H. We provide ongoing clinical care to the pediatric population as well as mentoring residents and medical students in this subspecialty area. We also support our colleagues in great British Columbia as a resource for their clinical concerns.

We anticipate continued growth and development collaborating with our gynecologic and pediatric colleagues.

## Research Funding:

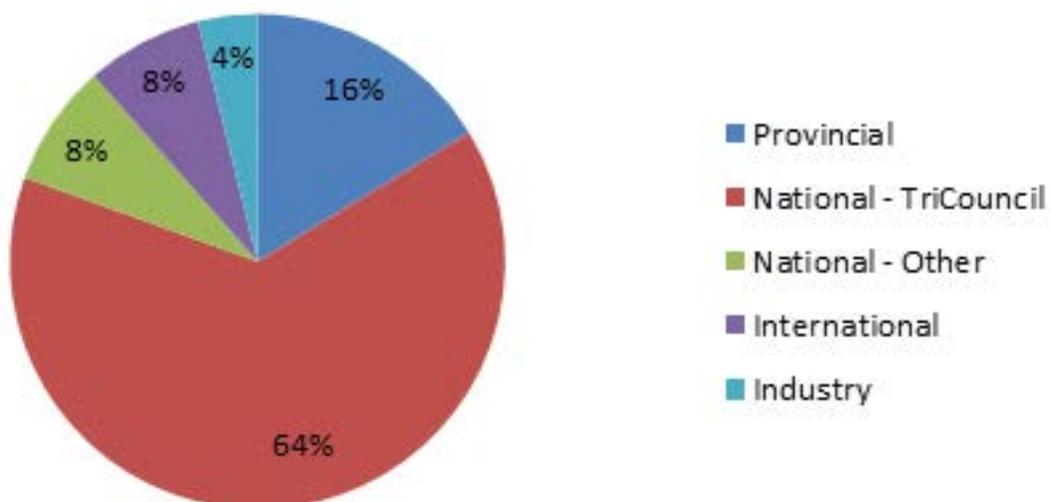
The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology held over \$4.5 million dollars in research funding in the 2016/17 fiscal year. This including funding for salary, infrastructure and operating.

### Research Funding by Type



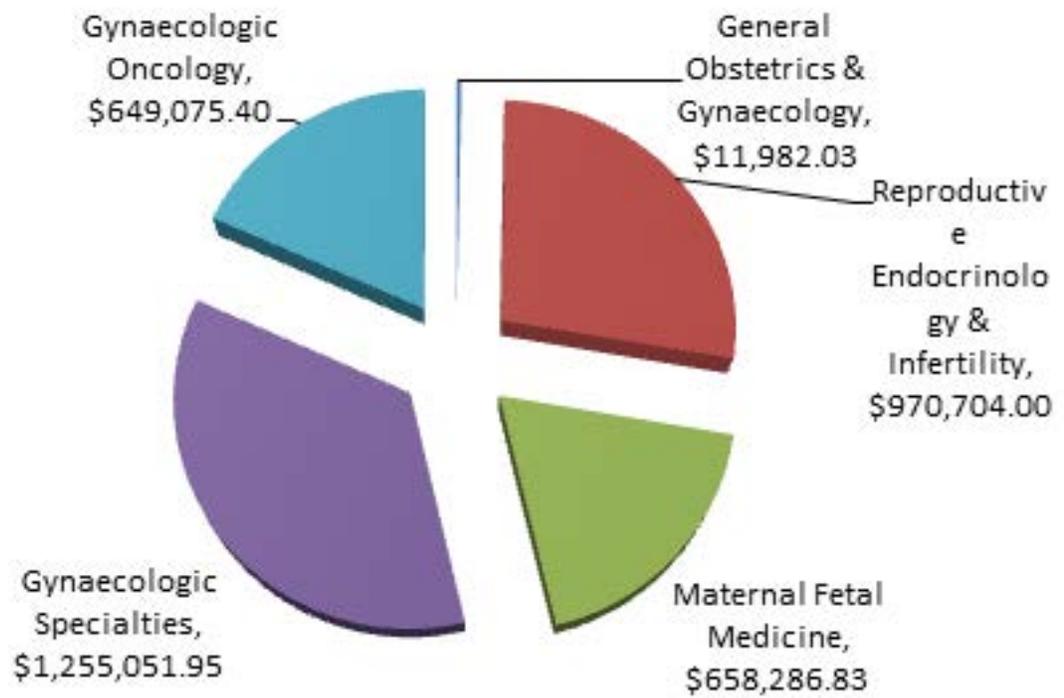
\$3,545,100.21 was held in research operating dollars from 20 different funders. Over 64% of this funding came from via peer-review competitive grants from the TriCouncil Agencies

### Funding by Source



## Research Funding:

### Funding breakdown by Division 2016/17



# UBC Obstetrics and Gynaecology 17th Annual Academic Day 2017

Our 17th annual Academic Day was held on Wednesday, March 8th, 2017 at the Chan Auditorium in the Child and Family Research Institute. Sixteen trainees had the opportunity to present their work as an oral presentation, and ten posters were presented and judged in a separate event on March 7th. Faculty abstracts were displayed to showcase the research done in 2016 by the department faculty.

The invited guest speaker was Dr. Sarah McDonald, Canada Research Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Radiology, and Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics, McMaster University, who gave the keynote presentation on “Canada’s New Preterm Birth Network: UBC’s pivotal role in this opportunity for OB, MFM, Neonatology, Follow-up and Health Economics to Innovate Together



## Academic Day Awards

Dr. Leanne Dahlgren presented the awards to the 2017 Academic Day Best Student Presentations. Our congratulations to the following recipients for sharing their research!

**Best clinical poster presentation – Clara Van Ommen**

**Best scientific poster presentation – Jennet Baltayeva and Lindsay Richter (a tie!)**

**Best resident paper presentation – Dr Kristy Cho**

**Best graduate student paper presentation – Elisabeth McClymont**

**Best fellow paper presentation – Dr Chelsea Elwood**

**Dr Jag Ubhi presented the Best Publication by a Resident Award to Dr Justin Mui for the publication “Abdominal Wall Pain in Women with Chronic Pelvic Pain”.**

Congratulations to our winners of a 4GB memory stick – Amy Dawson and Chelsea Elwood. All they had to do was fill out an evaluation form and hand it in at the end of the day!

## Teaching Awards

Dr. Geoffrey Cundiff presented the teaching awards to the 2016 winners. Our congratulations to the following recipients for being honoured!

**Mike Turko Surgical Teaching – Dr. Mark Heywood**

**CREOG Resident Teaching – Dr. Janice Kwon**

**Undergraduate Teaching – Dr. Henry Woo**

**APGO Teaching – Dr. Amanda Skoll**

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology would like to thank our sponsors this year for their very generous support: Allergan, AstraZeneca, Bayer, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute Research Education, Hoffman-LaRoche, and the Women's Health Research Institute!



## Dr. Fred Bryans Faculty Forum

### *Sowing the Seeds of Research Excellence in our Rising Stars*

In February 2017, we hosted the 7th Annual Dr. Fred Bryans Faculty Forum, “Sowing the Seeds of Research Excellence in our Rising Stars”.

The Forum began with a stimulating key note presentation by Dr. Malcolm Pike, Attending Epidemiologist at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, and Professor of Preventive Medicine at the University of Southern California. Dr. Pike presented his research on the challenges in the Hormonal Prevention of Breast, Endometrial and Ovarian Cancer.

Faculty presentations showcased the diversity of research work that takes place within our Department and the broad spectrum of women’s health research involved.

In addition to sharing the work of our faculty members, we organized a pre-forum workshop to build research capacity within the Department. Senior Departmental members shared their thoughts and expertise with regards to mentorship, establishing a research program, human resource issues, funding and publishing.

We are very grateful to have the opportunity to bring our faculty together through this Forum which is made possible by the generous endowment honouring Dr. Fred Bryans by his wife Jane. Throughout Dr. Bryans’ career and during his tenure as our Department head from 1960 to 1978, education and research endeavors were priorities. This Forum strives to continue his Departmental legacy by bringing together our faculty to celebrate our diverse research activities, share innovations and cultivate new collaborations across divisions and specialties.



*Dr. Fred Bryans*

The Forum attracted 67 participants from our and affiliated departments. We were honored to have Dr. Malcolm Pike, PhD, Attending Epidemiologist from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, open the Forum. Dr Pike provided an insightful presentation on Challenges in the Hormonal Prevention of Breast, Endometrial and Ovarian Cancer.

Throughout the afternoon we also had nine faculty presentations highlighting research that is changing clinical care and practice:

Stigma, Hope and Fear: Health Systems Challenges in Caring for Women Struggling with Problematic Substance-use in Northern British Columbia – **Dr. Sheona Mitchell**

Identification of potential novel treatment targets in endometriosis-associated deep dyspareunia – **Dr. Paul Yong**

Cultivating Modesty: a valuable trait for researchers – **Dr. Geoffrey Cundiff**

Safer Deliveries: Using mHealth to deliver point of care decision support and monitoring to revolutionize intrapartum care in Tanzania – **Dr. Roopan Gill**

Fetal, infant and maternal outcomes among women with prolapsing membranes admitted before 29 weeks gestation – **Dr. Julie Robertson**

Improving Cognitive Surgical Knowledge in Junior OB/GYN Residents Using an Interactive Computer-Based Laparoscopic Hysterectomy Trainer – **Dr. Neeraj Mehra**

The effect of maternal age on severe maternal morbidity and perinatal outcomes – **Dr. Sarka Lisonkova**

Cancer-Driver Events in Benign Endometriosis – **Dr. Michael Anglesio**

Perinatal epidemiology, sheep physiology and modern obstetrics – **Dr. KS Joseph**

Our presenters inspired attendees and generated interesting dialogue.

We sincerely thank our keynote presenter, our faculty presenters, and Mrs. Jane Bryans. We appreciated the enthusiasm and engagement of all the participants who contributed to another successful forum.



*Dr. Malcolm Pike at the 2017 Dr Fred Bryans Faculty Forum*

# AWARDS

## **Evelyn Maan receives the 2016 UBC President's Service Award for Excellence**

The Department is very proud to announce that Evelyn Maan received one of only five President's Services Awards in 2016. The award acknowledges staff who have made outstanding contributions to UBC, and who excel in their personal achievements.

Evelyn is originally from Hamilton Ontario where she began her nursing career before moving to BC in 1992. Through her work on BC Children's Hospital's Infectious Disease Unit, Evelyn took on an occasional nursing relief position in 1996 at the Oak Tree Clinic, a multidisciplinary clinic for women and their families living with or affected by HIV. In 2001, the Oak Tree team invited Evelyn to join them full time in a research nurse position to work on a single research project. Evelyn now manages the Oak Tree Clinic's comprehensive program of research with over a dozen active projects that focus on the ever-shifting needs of women and children living with HIV. The research program has numerous local, national and international collaborations and is supported by the Women's Health Research Institute.



## **Dr. Deborah Money: Recipient of the Career Contribution to Women's Health Research Award**

The Women's Health Research Institute is very pleased to announce that Dr. Deborah Money has been awarded our inaugural Career Contribution to Women's Health Research Award.



This award is given annually to a British Columbian researcher who has made an outstanding and exemplary contribution to women's health research in the province and globally during their career.

This award is an opportunity to recognize, honour, and most importantly, to thank an individual who has made exceptional and distinguished contributions to the health of women through their research and scholarly endeavours. It is, of course, fitting that Dr. Money would be the inaugural recipient, given her longstanding leadership and contributions to women's health research in this province and the globe.

Dr. Deborah Money, MD, FRCSC, is the Executive Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at UBC and is a Professor in the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medicine, and the School of Population and Public Health. She is a subspecialist in Reproductive Infectious Diseases and immediate past-Executive Director of the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI).

## **Dr. Jan Christilaw elected as a Member of the Order of Canada**

Created in 1967, the Order of Canada, one of our country's highest civilian honours, recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation.

On December 30th, his Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, named new members including Dr. Jan Christilaw. As Vice President, Provincial Women's and Newborn Health, PHSA, Dr Christilaw has become a renowned champion for women and newborn health provincially, nationally and globally



## **Dr. Dorothy Shaw appointed as Officer of the Order of Canada**



Dr. Shaw was recently honoured at a ceremony in Ottawa for one of Canada's highest recognitions, being appointed as Officer of the Order of Canada. As Officer, Dr. Shaw is recognized for national service for her contributions as a leader in advancing women's health care. Not only is she trailblazing the way for women's health at one of Canada's most specialized women's hospitals, Dr. Shaw is renowned for her international work advocating to improve women's reproductive rights and freedoms, and to improve the health of women, newborns and children.

## **Dr. Tracy Pressey receives 2017 MUS Teaching Excellence Award**

Congratulations on receiving the 2017 Medical Undergraduate Society Year 1 Teaching Excellence Award.





## **Distinguished Achievement Award Dr KS Joseph**

The Department is happy to announce that KS Joseph received the FoM Distinguished Achievement Award in the category of Overall Excellent – Senior Faculty in recognition of outstanding contributions in the areas of research, education and service.

## **Roopan Gill Awarded Prestigious Population Council Scholarship**

UBC Family Planning Fellow, Dr. Roopan Gill was awarded a prestigious fully funded scholarship to work with the Population Council for one month in New York City. She will be engaged in writing systematic reviews and involved with projects involving new reproductive and contraceptive technologies and learning how to move policy into action.



## **Dr Peter Leung Receives Mentorship Award**

The Department would like to congratulate Dr Peter Leung for receiving the 2016 John McNeill Excellent in Health Research Mentorship Award.

This award recognizes faculty members at any stage in their academic career, in any of UBC's health-related disciplines, who have formally been identified as mentors and who exemplify a deep commitment to fostering the professional and personal development of faculty colleagues, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows, in the early stages of their academic career.



## Winners of the OBGYN Staff Awards 2016

One of the five commitments in our Strategic Plan is to Realize Individual Potential. This includes recognizing the accomplishments of faculty and staff. There are already many established awards for Faculty but few for staff. In 2015 we set up the Staff Service Awards to recognise the dedication and achievements of our hard working staff. The recipient's of the 2016 awards were:



Scott Lewis



Deborah Pinchin



Mary Radmanovic

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