



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology

Faculty of Medicine



ANNUAL REPORT

2019



2020



The Department of
Obstetrics &
Gynaecology

www.obgyn.ubc.ca

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Department Head's Message

This year will always be remembered for the COVID19 pandemic. The limitations it has created on our clinical services, educational programs, and investigational aspirations are undeniable. How many of our daily communications of late begin with phrases like, "in these unprecedented adverse times," planting the message firmly within misfortune and hardship. But we should also remember the aphorism that "you build courage through surviving difficult times and challenging adversity." (Epicurus) From my perspective, this stoic maxim applies.

As a Province, we can be proud of our ability to go from the first community outbreak in Canada to one of the flattest prevalence curves worldwide. And this has translated to well managed hospital resources and a high survival rate. I believe that most British Columbians have been inspired by the "Be kind, be calm, be safe" message offered by Dr. Bonnie Henry, our exceptional B.C. provincial health officer. And UBC colleague. But there are equally inspirational leaders within our department who also deserve praise for the response to COVID-19.

The Reproductive Infectious Disease group, including Dr. Deborah Money, Dr. Julie van Schalkwyk, and Dr. Chelsea Elwood, have definitely challenged adversity and used their expertise to serve our province and beyond. Their efforts have included surveillance, research and knowledge translation. Recognizing the limited nature of existing evidence, they undertook a systematic review of all existing literature reporting on COVID-19 in pregnancy. They also initiated prospective COVID-19 research, through the CANCOVID-Preg study. To accomplish this Canadian surveillance project, they created a Canadian network involving interdisciplinary collaborators from all provinces and 2 territories. Next, they developed a platform for collecting data that would capture maternal and neonatal outcomes towards reporting on the burden of COVID-19 infection on pregnancy, and facilitate planning and support for COVID-19 affected pregnancies. You can learn more about this novel study at: <https://ridprogram.med.ubc.ca/canccovid-preg/>

Of course, a key element to managing the pandemic has been accurate knowledge translation. The Reproductive Infectious Disease Group has offered a 24/7 phone consultation, but have also been proactive in offering weekly Province-wide multidisciplinary rounds through the UBC Department rounds platform. They have also worked with BC Women's Hospital and the Perinatal Services BC, to develop provincial guidelines for COVID-19 in pregnancy. They then leveraged this work to become part of the BC Clinical Guidelines Committee at the BC Centre for Disease Control, as well as working on Canadian Guidelines through the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. This is a brilliant example of how our department's scholarship can support clinical expertise to provide timely improvement in women's healthcare that reaches far beyond our department.

While the Reproductive Infectious Disease Group's stellar work is the most obvious example of how our department serves our patients and the province, there are many others that are highlighted in this annual report. Our department has evolved into a consortium of cross pillar researchers that design and implement studies to inform the clinical care provided by our experts in women's health care. More than that, we are also educators that utilize the latest in pedagogical methods to train tomorrow's scientists, educators and providers. And like any great creation, our department is always changing. This year, we have recruited many new leaders, including new Division Co-Heads for Gynaecologic Oncology (Drs. Sarah Finlayson and Jessica McAlpine), new Program Directors for the Undergraduate Program (Drs. Marketa Gogela-Spehar and Christopher Ng), the Residency Program (Dr. Hanna Ezzat), and the Fellowship in Gynaecologic Oncology (Dr. Harry Brar), and new representatives for the Interior Health Authority (Dr. Karen Meathral) and Island Health (Dr. Regina Renner). We have also recruited a new Site Head for Vancouver General Hospital (Dr. Murette Lee). Beyond celebrating our new leadership, this report also highlights our departing leaders and their incredible impact on our department. The department will also have a new Interim Head as Professor Gavin Stuart steps forward to take on that role. As I complete my second and final term as Head of this department, I am proud and honoured to have worked with such impassioned and brilliant colleagues, and I am proud of what we have achieved. But I also look forward to my successor's vision and seeing the department continue to evolve.

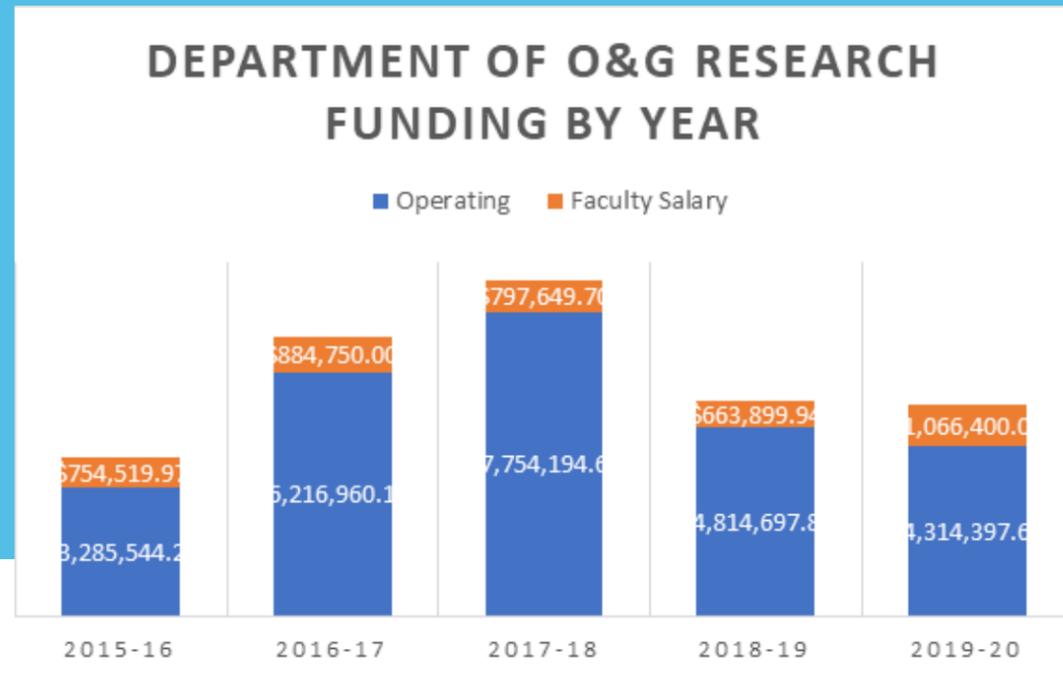


Geoffrey Cundiff
Department Head
OBGYN

Research Update

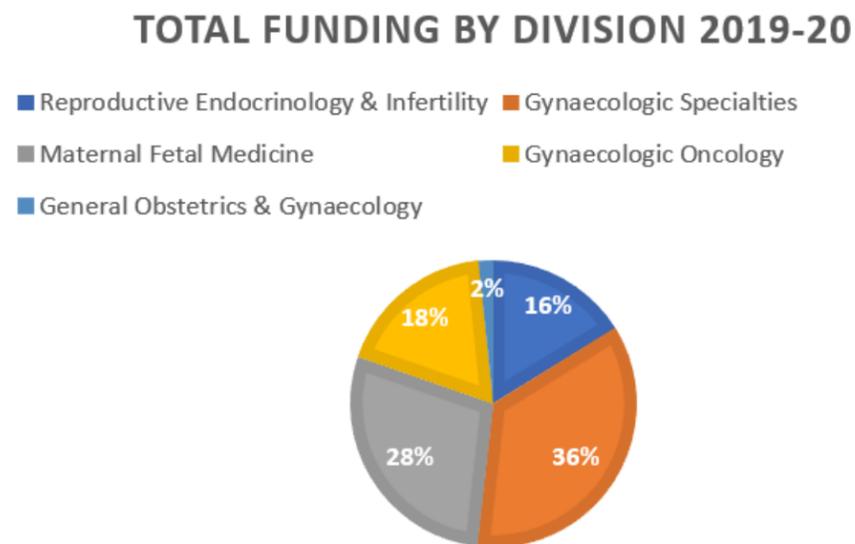
The UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has maintained strong research funding for the last 5 years. This year saw stable operational funding and a 60% increase in funding of salary awards for departmental researchers. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Departmental Research Funding for 5 years.



About 55% of our research funding comes from Tri-council funding, with the other 45% coming from foundations and industry. Nearly 90% of these funds are won through peer reviewed competitions and these funds are held by investigators in all Divisions (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Total Research funding by Division.



Scholarly Productivity

While research funding is essential to accomplishing meaningful discovery, the publication of scholarly work is necessary for this to translate into societal benefit. Consequently, a better measure of scholarly impact for the department requires an analysis of publications, and their significance. For the last few years we have used standard bibliometrics for this analysis and compared our department to Canadian University Departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The UBC Department is the second largest in Canada with 50% of the faculty numbers of the largest Department at the University of Toronto. While not the largest department in Canada, the UBC Department continues, for the second year in a row to lead Canadian University Departments in the number of publications per author (Figure 3), as well as the number of citations per author. (Figure 4)

Figure 1. Comparison of Canadian Departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in terms of publications, and field weighted citation index.

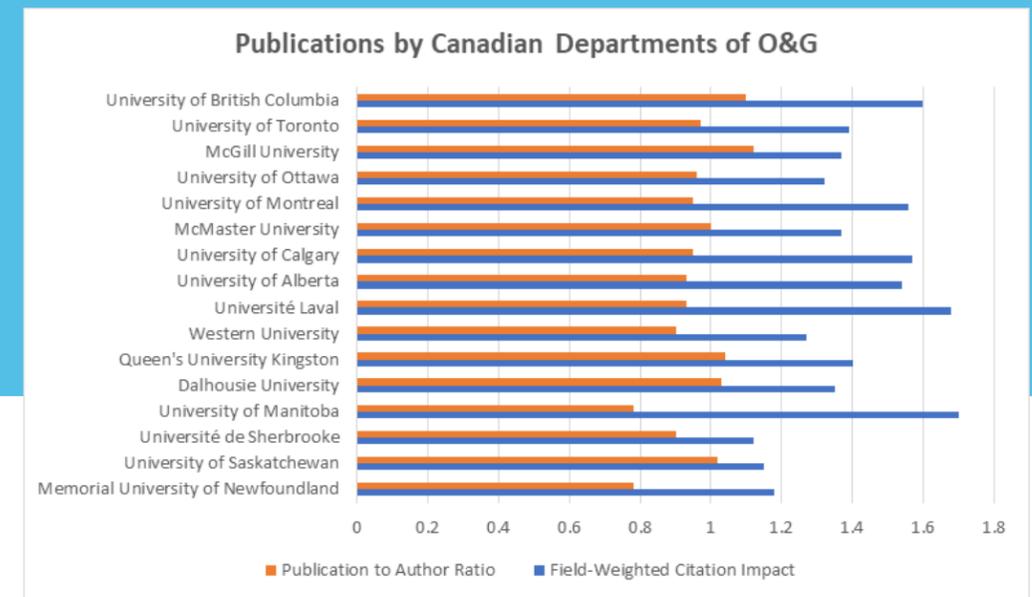
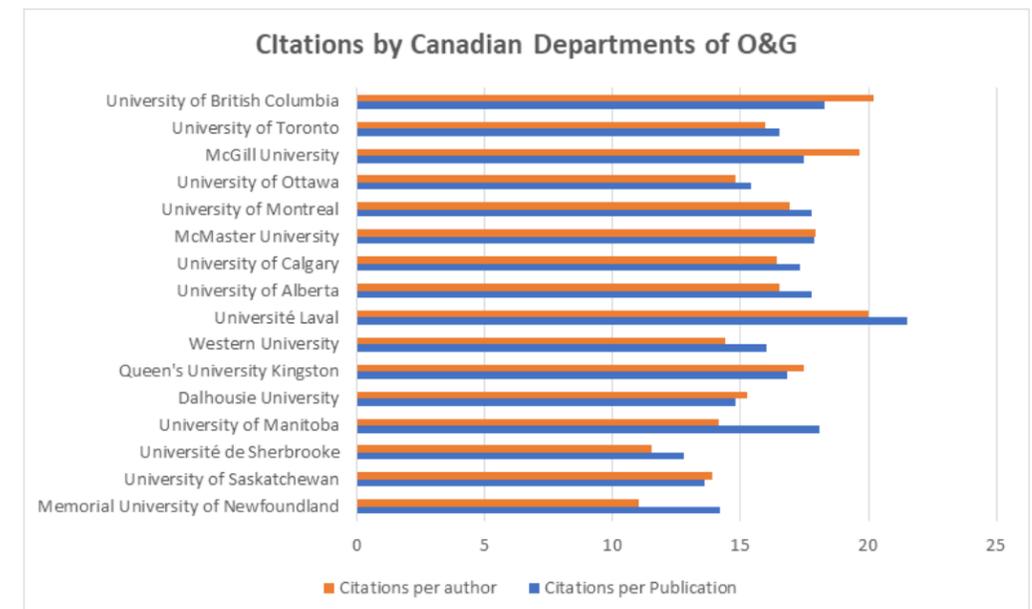


Figure 2. Comparison of Canadian Departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in terms of citations per author and citations per publication



Associate Head's Message

As Associate Research Head and Chair of the Department Research Advisory Committee, I work with a collegial, multidisciplinary, and multi-site team to promote and facilitate research productivity across the Department

This year posed an unprecedented challenge for us. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, research came to a grinding halt in March, which had significant financial and academic impact on our Department. Some were able to apply for exemptions to continue with research because it was related to COVID-19, and others had research directly linked to clinical care, or biospecimens that required immediate attention. Unfortunately, some research staff were either terminated or furloughed, and some operating costs could not be deferred. The estimated research funds deferred or lost as a result of the pandemic totaled close to \$400,000 over a 3 month period. With Phase 2 of research resumption in progress, investigators and their teams are finally making up lost ground.

There are 2 important Department resources/events that have been designed to provide information about research funding and opportunities, as well as bring Department members together to share research ideas and potential for collaboration. The 1st is the OB GYN Research Newsletter, which has been issued semi-monthly since its inception in 2019 by Mannie Fan, Research Site manager at Vancouver Coastal. A survey was circulated to the Department prior to the province-wide Department meeting in June 2020 to seek input about the value of the newsletter. Of the responders, the majority attested to the usefulness of the information, and that the newsletter should continue in its current format. The 2nd is the Fred Bryans Faculty Forum, one of Dr. Fred Bryans' legacies established almost 10 years ago as a venue for showcasing research in the Department, and an opportunity to share ideas for collaboration across Divisions. Over the last decade, attendance has been fairly consistent, with about half of the registrants being clinicians, while the other half being comprised of researchers, trainees, and research staff. The majority of respondents strongly endorse the Forum. Planning for the 2021 Forum is well underway, with the proposed theme of "Patient Oriented Research", which will be a virtual meeting in light of the unresolved COVID-19 pandemic.

In the year ahead, in the context of COVID-19 recovery, the Department aims to increase research collaboration and productivity by bringing together researchers from across the Department. There is still the perception that divisions and various research groups work in "silos" and that there could be many more opportunities that transcend multiple disciplines. Meetings across sites have been facilitated by virtual formats (ZOOM, Webex, Skype), an unexpected benefit of the pandemic. Expanding efforts for fund raising for women's health and providing support to new and smaller research teams will also be a focus in the upcoming year.



Janice Kwon
Associate Head
OBGYN

Undergraduate Education Update

New Leadership for Undergraduate Model

Background

As the Department initiates the recruitment of a new UGME Program Director, the Departmental Executive Committee reviewed the current model, in which all responsibilities fall on the UGME Program Director. Based on feedback from the UGME Program Director, and discussion a new model of leadership was considered which would spread responsibilities among more parties and help to build expanded knowledge of the UGME which could be beneficial for succession planning.

New Model

While overall decision making will remain the responsibility of the UGME Program Director, this role will be supported by both an Associate Program Director and a Undergraduate Committee.

Program Director

Provide oversight and decision making for the UGME Program. The primary focus will be managing the Clerkship, and overseeing the DSSLs for VFMP and Distributed sites. The Program Director will also provide direction to the Associate Program Director and Chair the Undergraduate Education Committee. Will provide back up for Associate Program Director absences.

Associate Program Director

The primary focus will be managing the Foundations portion of the program as well as the Year 4 Electives. Will provide back up for Program Director absences.

Undergraduate Education Committee

Serve in an advisory capacity to the UGME Program Director on all aspects of the UGME program.

Composition:

-  Program Director (chair)
-  Associate Program Director
-  DSSL Representative for VFMP
-  DSSL Representative for distribute programs
-  Resident Representative
-  Student Representative

New Leadership

I've had a lifelong enthusiasm for education which has been fostered by world class teachers who have devoted their time and expertise to guiding others. This was honed throughout my rigorous residency program at UBC, where opportunities to teach and the acquisition of pedagogy sustained me. I was delighted to be awarded the inaugural Dr. Robert Liston teaching award and was recognized again the following year with the same award. After graduating, I began my career in Kelowna and had the privilege to work alongside other passionate teachers in the UBC Southern Medical program. There, I completed the master teacher certificate program and was honoured to receive the graduating class award for best clinical teacher. Subsequently I transitioned my practice to Langley where I have been involved with education at the undergraduate, post graduate and continuing education levels since 2016.

I am excited and honoured to be taking on the role of Associate Program Director of the MD undergraduate program alongside Dr. Marketa Gogela. With Dr. Sarah Finlayson moving on, we both have very large shoes to fill. The OBGYN program has a tremendous reputation at UBC in large part due to Dr. Finlayson's and Dr. Pressey's work. I can't wait to share my passion for the field, and for teaching, with our learners.

Our newest learners present unique challenges. With the advent of COVID 19 and the prevalence of virtual learning, they will receive a very different training than any other generation before them. There is very little literature to guide educators on delivering medical education remotely. This will be an opportunity to lead the way in using technology to encourage engagement and ensure knowledge is absorbed. Medical education must adapt to fulfill their needs but continue to hold them to the same high standards.

Regardless, none of this would be possible without each and every one of you. Please know that your time and dedication to teaching is appreciated, especially in these times. You are making a tremendous difference to our future colleagues, and the future of our programme.



Chris Ng
Associate Director
MD Undergraduate
Director

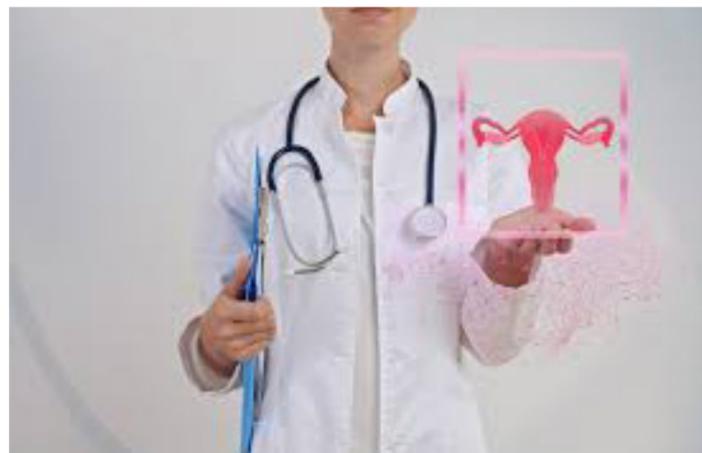


Marketa Gogela
MD Undergraduate
Program Director

Dr Marketa Gogela is the new Program Director for the MD Undergraduate Program. Dr Gogela took on this role in July 2020.

Dr. Gogela is a Clinical Assistant Professor. She completed her MD at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Marketa's role provides oversight and decision making for the UGME Program. The primary focus will be managing the Clerkship, and overseeing the DSSLs for VFMP and Distributed sites.



Postgraduate Education Update

ACCREDITATION SUCCESS

In July 2019 our Residency program launched the new Competency Based Medical Education (CBME). In the same year, the Royal College produced their new accreditation standards and review process.

The new process took much the 2019 year as all the programs needed to ensure they were meeting the new accreditation standards. Both Program Directors and Program Administrators worked over the next year to develop new policies/processes or revise old ones.

In September, all the information was uploaded to the new Royal College CanAms program and reviewed by the PGME office.

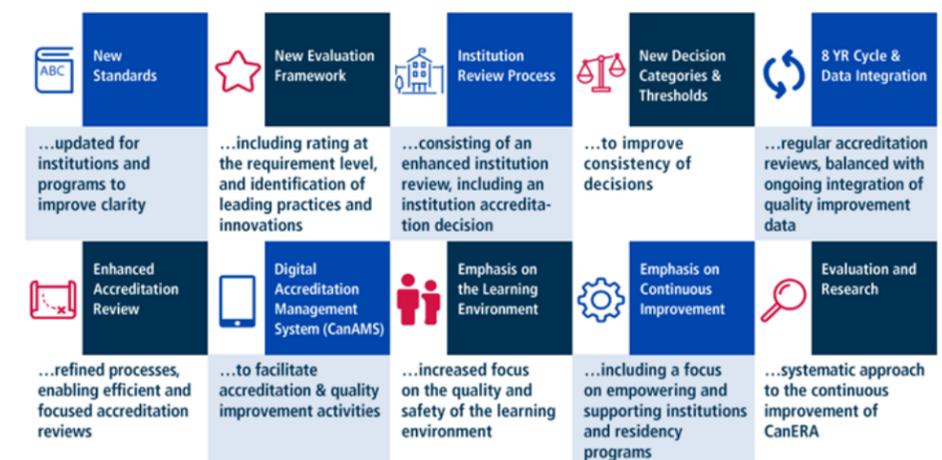
Then just before Covid-19 hit, in early March, the Royal College surveyors, arrived to the various sites to conduct accreditation reviews on each of our PGME programs. Our team did an incredible preparing all the documents and ensuring all our policies/processes were in order while welcome the surveyors.

In the end, their dedication and outstanding efforts were rewarded with each program reaching "Accredited for 8 years".

Congratulations to the OBGYN Residency program along with our Fellowship Programs: Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM), Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility (REI) and Gynaecologic Oncology (Gyne Onc).

CANADIAN EXCELLENCE IN RESIDENCY ACCREDITATION

CanERA introduces the following key features:



In 2013, the Canadian Residency Accreditation Consortium (CanRAC) was formed by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and embarked on reform of the accreditation system. The accreditation of the Postgraduate programs highlights the best practices for residencies that ultimately results in the production of competent Obstetrician-Gynecologists. This change was necessary to reflect the implementation of Competency By Design (CBD), the Canadian version of Competency Based Medical Education. These efforts resulted in the creation of a blueprint for CanERA – Canadian Excellence in Residency Accreditation, a 21st century accreditation system that incorporates and innovates on global best practices in accreditation, representing a methodological, dynamic and multi-faceted approach to the evaluation of residency programs and institutions. The aim of CanERA is to: ensure the quality of residency education provided across Canada;

- objectively evaluate residency programs and institutions to ensure compliance with required expectations;
- facilitate and contribute to the continuous quality improvement of residency programs and institutions; and
- ensure that residency education adequately prepares residents to meet the health care needs of their patient populations upon completion of training.

In CBD, continuous quality improvement is a key feature and similarly in CanERA, quality improvement is also highlighted including features of how is the program evaluated, how frequently the program is evaluated and does the program meet the social mandate of the public.

New Leadership

I completed a Masters in the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology at the University of Toronto. My area of focus was in the history of medicine and specifically the integration of ultrasound into obstetric practice and the effect of this new technology on women's experience of being pregnant as well as the birth of the concept of fetus as patient and the formation of new clinical dilemmas for physicians. I then did medical undergraduate training at the University of Toronto and a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at UBC. I currently practice as a general Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at BC Women's Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital. My background in history and philosophy helps me to value context and to value broad perspectives and diverse stories. This background also allows me to see problems through a social and cultural lens and to both listen to and be deeply informed by the stories and experiences of historically marginalised groups. Since starting practice, I have always had an interest in education and medical education scholarship. I have previously had a leadership role within the Obstetric and Gynaecologic core undergraduate clerkship program.

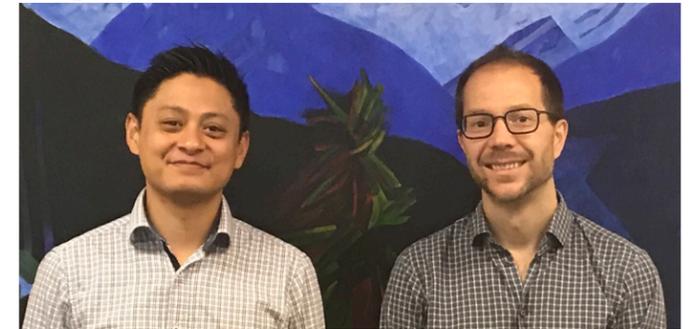
My vision for the Residency Training Program is to continue to foster existing relationships and the robust clinical training experiences that the program has always offered. I would also like to enhance the formal educational curriculum for our residents and draw on the existing strengths of our talented faculty to help deliver it. In addition to the traditional focus on medical expert knowledge, this curriculum will include regular anatomy and surgical skills training, regular high-fidelity simulation of uncommon but serious obstetrical emergencies, patient safety and quality improvement workshops as well as sessions devoted to concrete skill building in the areas of effective communication and collaboration. These skills are highly sought after in practicing physicians and essential to diverse inclusive teams.

On a personal level I am deeply grateful for all the educational opportunities I have had and the wonderful teachers and mentors I have encountered from across the province.



Hanna Ezzat
Director Postgraduate
Residency Program

Graduate Program Update



Drs. Paul Yong (left) & Alexander Beristain (right)
Co-Program Director, RDS Graduate Studies

Awards/Scholarships

- Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship:**
Kate Wahl (Norman/Munro) and Maggie Woo Kinshella (Elango)
- Affiliated Fellowships – Doctoral**
Natasha Orr (Yong/Anglesio) (Li Tze Fong)
- CGS-M (CIHR)**
Scholarships: Alicia Long (Yong/Hanley)
- Affiliated Fellowships – Master's**
Jeremy Wang (Hutcheon)
- BCCHR**
BCCHR Healthy Starts Graduate Studentship: Jeffrey Bone (Lisonkova)
- BC Graduate Scholarship**
Evan Cairns (Anglesio)
- Public Scholars Initiative**
Natasha Orr (Yong/Anglesio)

Graduations

- PhD**
Madeleine Ennis (Elango)
Fahad Alotaibi (Yong)
Elisabeth McClymont (Money)
- MSc**
Sunaina Sharma (Bedaiwy)
Caroline Lee (Yong/Bedaiwy)
Ei-Xia Mussai (Devlin)
Marina Giovannoni

New Faculty

- Ryan Flannigan (Urology)
Pascal Lavoie (Pediatrics)
Nichole Fairbrother (Psychiatry)
Manon Ranger (Nursing)
Sarah Munro, Aline Talhouk (OBGYN)

WACH Program

The Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology continues to collaborate with the Department of Pediatrics are collaborating to development the umbrella program for graduate student training in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH). The term Women+ embraces women, transgender, and non-binary individuals.

The program and training will be interdisciplinary, building on the strengths of our Biomedical and Clinician-Scientists, whose research encompasses biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health in multiple disciplines that include translational and precision medicine. Other important disciplines for the program include social sciences, data science, implementation science, biomedical engineering, and health economics, while rethinking the pedagogy and curriculum structure.

The Women and Children's Health Sciences (WACH) Program curriculum is based on creating scientific experts that have career competencies across six domains, including scholarship, professionalism, communication, collaboration, Leadership and advocacy. These competencies are represented by the Competency Passport Framework (ComPass) WACH learners choose one of 3 streams:

- ✓ Women & Health
- ✓ Child Health
- ✓ Reproductive and Development Sciences (RDS)

We will encourage professional development for our students in the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program, which in addition to the Competency Passport (ComPass), also includes an Individual Development Plan (IDP), and formal mentorship. The curriculum incorporates Competence by Design and emphasizes the Enhanced Scholar program. The ComPass is adapted with permission from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

The steering committee is currently going through the various approval processes required by the University. We are hopeful that we will go live in September 2022.

Continuing Professional Development



ANATOMY COURSE

Anatomy is the foundation of surgery. Gynecologic surgeons operate in one of the most complex anatomic environments of the human body from different perspectives such as vaginal, abdominal and laparoscopic. The complexity of female pelvic anatomy is due to large variations in the bony pelvis that alters the view and access to the anatomic structures as well as large variation in the origin and course of blood vessels that traverse this highly innervated environment. Hence, a deep knowledge and understanding of the three-dimensional relationship of these anatomic structures is the key to surgical competency, patient safety and successful treatment outcomes.



The Department is organizing advanced laparoscopic anatomy workshops in adherence with the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists (AAGL) standards and to elevate GYN surgery. These hands-on workshops at this scale are the first in Canada and are instructed by renowned international, national and local faculty with wide experience in surgical mentorship. The learning objectives of the course are deep understanding of pelvic anatomy, proficient dissection techniques in proper surgical planes and efficient laparoscopic suturing.

The Department believes that a surgeon's competency is a moral obligation to the patient and that attaining proficiency is continual, aided by ongoing advanced learning and workshops such as this.



DA BOYES CLINICAL REVIEW

2019 saw the 45th DA Boyes Clinical Review. As usual we had a superb line up of presenters over the course of the two day event.

At the meeting we awarded the DA Boyes Community Teaching Award for 2019. This went to the team in Kamloops for their dedication to residency teaching.



DA BOYES MEMORIAL RESEARCH AWARD

The D. A. Boyes Society, in honor, and memory, of Dr. David Alexander Boyes' lifetime commitment to teaching and engagement announce the third year of the Memorial Research Award.

This is a grant competition designed to provide critical review, with rapid turnaround, and funding for proposals that would not be eligible to receive funding at the national level. Examples would be clinical projects without a basic science component, projects for which there is a hypothesis but no preliminary data, smaller circumscribed projects that are self-limited. This award is open to all learners within the Department.

The successful project this year was for Cannabis use in women with chronic and myofascial pelvic pain: A Survey. Principal Applicant: Merry Gong.



Dr. Merry Gong



FRED BRYAN'S FACULTY FORUM

Obstetrics and Gynaecology in the Digital Age: Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Women's Health Care

On Thursday, January 30, 2020 we held the 10th Annual Dr. Fred Bryans Faculty Forum in the Sheraton Wall Centre in downtown Vancouver. There were who participated.

We started the Forum with two workshops – “Influencing policy (makers) through research” and “Representing patients’ voices in our research”. Dr. Ann Pederson and Dr. Sarah Munro spoke to attendees about the common barriers to implementing best evidence into practice and policy; and led attendees through examples of “Let it happen”; “Help it happen”; “Make it happen”. Dr. Stirling Bryan from the BC Support Unit shared with our members the BC SUPPORT Unit's vision for Patient Oriented Research and how to access available resources so that investigators can engage patients in their research.

An overview of the supports and services offered by our BC based research institutes – BC Children's Hospital Research Institute; Centre for Health Evaluation & Outcome Sciences; Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute; Women's Health Research Institute – led us into the networking lunch break.

Matthew T Trunnell, Vice President and Chief Data Officer at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and Director of Hutch Data Commonwealth, joined us from Seattle for his keynote address “Enabling the Digital Revolution in Health Care: Rethinking How We Think about Data.” Mr. Trunnell first spent some time clarifying Artificial Intelligence (AI) vs machine and deep learning. He went on to discuss the Cascadia Data Discovery Initiative – a collaboration with Fred Hutch, the BC Cancer Agency and others – that is working to overcome barriers to data discovery and data access in health research.

Excellent presentations from our own department members followed. Dr. Mohamed Bedaiwy shared his ongoing work in recurrent pregnancy loss and the emerging role of precision medicine. Dr. Jennifer Hutcheon shared preliminary results from her CIHR funded study “Long-term safety of antenatal corticosteroid administration for child neurodevelopment”. Dr. Nicole Todd talked about the importance of stakeholder buy-in when planning and implementing your research – stressing her view that research “data is only valuable if it is seen as relevant and useful by prospective users.” Dr. Ali Bashashati rounded out the first set of faculty presentations by talking about the use of AI in ovarian cancer histopathology.

Following the coffee break, Dr. Sara Houlihan shared the results of the RCT she led “Midurethral sling tensioning (MUST) trial: a comparison of suburethral scissors versus looped babcock technique”. Dr. Regina Renner shared plans for her CIHR funded study “The Canadian abortion provider survey (CAPS)”. Dr. Aline Talhouk discussed the ethics of data sharing in her pilot project building “LEAP” in endometriosis. Finally, Dr. Jon Havelock and his collaborator from Simon Fraser University, Dr. Parvaneh Saeedi, shared how they are developing automated image analysis and AI to improve IVF outcomes.

It was inspiring to see the diversity of research being carried out in the Department and the productive and supportive collaborations that everyone is engaged in.

We are grateful to the generosity of Dr. Fred and Mrs. Jane Bryans for providing us with the opportunity to share research and ideas across the department.

Dr. Fred Bryans



Faculty Awards

Dr Lori Brotto

Professor OBGYN
Distinguished Service Award in Service to the University and Community (awarded 2019)
This award recognizes meritorious performance.



Dr Paul Yong

Professor OBGYN
Distinguished Service Award in Service to the University and Community (awarded 2019)
This award recognizes meritorious performance.



Faculty of Medicine Education Awards

Dr Tracy Pressey

Clinical Associate Professor, OBGYN
Killam Teaching Award (awarded 2019)
Awarded to faculty nominated by students, colleagues, and alumni in recognition of excellence in teaching.



Dr Fariba Mohtashami

Clinical Associate Professor OBGYN
Clinical Faculty Award for Excellence in Community Practice Teaching (awarded 2019)
Recognizes clinical faculty members throughout British Columbia who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and made an educational impact in a local community.



Dr Sarah Finlayson

Clinical Associate Professor OBGYN
Clinical Faculty Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching (awarded 2019)
Recognizes excellence in teaching by clinical faculty members.



Dr Blair Butler

Clinical Associate Professor OBGYN
Clinical Faculty Award for Career Excellence in Teaching (awarded 2019)
Recognizes senior clinical faculty members who have demonstrated sustained excellence in teaching over the course of their careers.



Faculty of Medicine Distinguished Researcher Awards

Dr Lori Brotto

Professor, OBGYN
Faculty of Medicine Distinguished Researcher Award (awarded 2019)
The Faculty of Medicine recognizes our outstanding researchers with this award.



External Research Salary Awards

Dr Sarah Munro

Assistant (Partner) Professor, OBGYN
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar Award (awarded 2019)
The MSFHR Scholar Program supports early-career health researchers who are building leading-edge health research programs, training the next generation of scientists, and expanding their potential to make significant contributions to their field. Dr Munro was recognized in 2019 for her work in knowledge translation and implementation science.



Dr Aline Talhouk

Assistant Professor OBGYN
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar Award (awarded 2019)
The MSFHR Scholar Program supports early-career health researchers who are building leading-edge health research programs, training the next generation of scientists, and expanding their potential to make significant contributions to their field. Dr Talhouk was recognized in 2019 for her work in machine learning and artificial intelligence in women's health research.



Dr Michael Anglesio

Assistant Professor OBGYN
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar Award (awarded 2019)
The MSFHR Scholar Program supports early-career health researchers who are building leading-edge health research programs, training the next generation of scientists, and expanding their potential to make significant contributions to their field. Dr Anglesio was recognized in 2019 for his work in defining the distinct genomics between ovarian cancer types including landmark studies reclassifying cell lines for type specific ovarian cancer research, and defining common recurrent molecular changes in rare ovarian subtypes including mucinous, clear cell, and endometrioid histotypes.



External Achievement Awards

Dr Catherine Allaire

Clinical Professor of OBGYN

James E. Carter Pain Achievement Award from the International Pelvic Pain Society (awarded 2019)
Recognizes lifetime achievement in pain research and education. It will honor researchers and clinicians with significant contributions to pain research, education, and clinical care.



Dr David Huntsman

Professor of OBGYN/Pathology

Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (Awarded in 2019)

Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), the highest honour a scholar can achieve in the arts, social sciences and sciences in Canada.



Dr Deborah Money

Professor of OBGYN

Infectious Diseases Society for Obstetrics and Gynecology Life Time Achievement Award (Awarded in 2019)

The award recognizes Dr. Money for her outstanding contributions to scientific exchange, education and leadership in infectious diseases in women.



Dr Timothy Rowe

Associate Professor OBGYN

Canadian Medical Association Honorary Member (Awarded 2019)

Honorary membership to the Canadian Medical Association goes to BC doctors who, at the age of 65, having been active members of the association for at least 10 years. Recipients must also have been nominated by their provincial/territorial medical associations and have had their nominations approved unanimously by the Board of Directors of the CMA.



Staff Awards

CUPE 2950 - Brian Nelson

Brian Nelson is a native of Ireland (in case you couldn't place the accent!) He first came to Canada in 2014, initially Toronto, before coming to his senses and moving to Vancouver in 2015. He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Ulster, however, following his move to Vancouver he also moved out of the engineering field and has been working at UBC and specifically with the OBGYN Department since early 2017.



Management & Professional - Marianne Vidler

Marianne Vidler is the Program Manager for PRE-EMPT and is responsible for research leadership, direction, management planning, and implementation of related projects across multiple international research jurisdictions. Marianne has also completed her doctoral degree in Reproductive and Developmental Science in 2017 at UBC. Her doctoral research focused on community knowledge, attitudes and practices related to obstetric care in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.



Non UBC Award - Marie Rivard

Marie Rivard started with the department of OBGYN March 2002 as Administrative Coordinator. Her role is to support the MFM Division Head and helps him to coordination of yearly Provincial Meetings, MFM Division Review, yearly BCW/VGH reappointments, and she works closely with the Director on MFM operational items such as MFM call schedule, OBGYN group call schedule. Marie also oversees the MFM administrative assistants and liaises with other BCW and UBC departments.

Marie really enjoys to travel and recently did a bike and boat trip in Europe, followed by a trip to Iceland where she was able to make the most of her love of animals (and in particular horses) with a ride on an Icelandic horse!



Division of General Obstetrics & Gynaecology

In the last third of the year the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the clinical, educational and research activities of the Department, including the General Division of OBGYN. The priorities of the Division were shifted in adherence to the policies and to ensure safety of the patients, faculty and learners. This has affected the learning experience of the students within all programs and postponed CPD activities for the faculty, including the 3rd UBC Anatomy Workshop that was scheduled for May 2020.

Some changes enforced by the pandemic have been positive and well received by the medical community. The initial data on the experience of both patients and physicians with tele health communication has been positive, and this will likely shape the nature of medical practice in the coming years.

Most importantly, webinars have become the standard mode of communication and delivery of educational events such as rounds and conferences in the Department. The zoom platform has been improved, is now more secure, and provides the means for more efficiently connecting large groups.

The distributed nature of the Department has long been known as a major challenge, especially in terms of communication and effective collaboration among the members. Only 49 out of 152 of General Division members work in the Vancouver vicinity with immediate access to the services provided by the University. The virtual platform is helping to compensate for the geographical distribution of the audience and has improved the sense of inclusion and equity amongst all members.

On the other hand, virtual activities have opened the door to diverse presenters from across the province and beyond. This is in fact an opportunity to expand the variety of topics in the upcoming academic year to expand our knowledge and skills.

Moving forward, the CME and local conferences will be mostly virtual for the foreseeable future and there will be inevitable adaptations to the way we function to meet the priorities of our Division, namely: Faculty Development, Education, Patient Safety & Quality Improvement.

In the coming year, I plan to visit various Lower Mainland and distributed centers to assess specific institutional and personal needs. Surgical mentorship will be provided to the faculty members on request. A surgical video library is under development and will go live in the coming year.

Finally, we thank the past Chair of the Department of OBGYN for his dedicated service over the last ten years and we look forward to working with the new Chair.



Fariba Mohtashami, Division Head of General O&G

Division of Gynaecologic Oncology

For the past several decades, women in British Columbia with affected by gynecologic cancer have benefited from the presence of Dianne Miller as a caring, skilled and knowledgeable gynecologic oncologist. Whether as an Associate Professor in our Department, as BCCA Gynecology Tumour Group leader for 20 years, as Division Head of Gynecologic Oncology for a long time or simply a compassionate clinician, Dianne has selflessly enabled the discipline of gynecologic oncology at UBC to become internationally recognized and celebrated. She has done this through tireless advocacy for patients and colleagues, thoughtful and determined recruitment of team members, passionate and energetic fund-raising and a commitment to improve the lives of those affected by these cancers.

Although this year, Dianne will retire from her UBC position, her impact will remain for many years to come. By being a pioneer in many respects, she has empowered others to achieve what they might have viewed as impossible. After graduating in the UBC MD class of 1980, she first decided to be a general practitioner in Yellowknife, NWT. Exploring new boundaries and settings would quickly become a characteristic of Dianne's career. Sensing the passion of providing care to women, she returned to Vancouver in 1983 to complete her residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Even then, she saw a gap in our ability to care for some women and pursued a 6 month elective in sexual medicine at McMaster University. In Toronto, Dianne was one of the first women in Canada to complete formal training in gynecologic oncology. In 1990, she was appointed as an Assistant Professor at UBC.

In the past 30 years, Dianne has provided care for countless numbers of women; she has educated and trained numerous residents and fellows and other learners; she has asked the most astute and penetrating questions in order to ensure that research has flourished under her watch. She has enjoyed those times when told that something cannot be done in which case she has worked until the impossible is achieved. Dianne has never been dissuaded from what she thinks is the right thing to do. And yet, she has done this in such a manner that it is never "about Dianne" but rather supporting, mentoring, encouraging those with whom she works.

In addition to her exemplary patient care, she has been highly effective in fundraising working closely with the UBC + VGH Hospital Foundation as well as the BC Cancer Foundation. She has been able to attract resources even in difficult times. She has also been a selfless advocate for research from basic science to clinical studies to psychosocial and survivorship issues. As Division Head, she was always able to find those small resources to support that last research proposal. Finally, her leadership has been consistent and resolute in supporting women in medicine, nurturing young colleagues, maintaining a standard and putting our patients first.

Dianne leaves the Division with a legacy of excellence, passion and commitment to the women in British Columbia and beyond.



Dianne Miller, Division Head of Gynaecologic Oncology

Division of Gynaecologic Specialities

The Division of Gynaecologic Specialities members had another stellar year receiving multiple grants and awards, as mentioned in the other sections of this report. Congratulations to Dr. Paul Yong obtained full tenure as an Associate Professor. We welcomed new members to the Division: Dr. Sara Munro who has expertise in knowledge translation and implementation science and Dr. Alia Sachedina who completed a Fellowship in Pediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology.

Under the direction of our Division members, the Advanced Training Programs in Family Planning, Advanced Laparoscopy/Endo/Pelvic Pain, and Urogynaecology continued to thrive and graduate subspecialists who took on academic roles in their area of interest. A new 6-month training program in Vulvovaginal Disorders/Sexual Medicine was created and is directed by Dr. Ulrike Dehaeck and had their first graduate in 2019.

In 2020, Covid-19 has been a challenge for all of us, but also highlighted our resilience and commitment. A special nod to our RID members (Dr's. Money, Elwood and Van Schalkwyk) who rose to the challenge of keeping us safe and well informed in an ever-changing landscape, all while finding research opportunities from this crisis!



Catherine Allaire, Division Head of Gynaecologic Specialities

Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine

The MFM Division has had a number of successes to report amidst the chaos of the pandemic, which has affected us all

The clinical faculty continue to grow in number. We welcomed many new members to the UBC Division, Jessica Liauw (PHSA), Deidre O'Connor (FHA) and Christina Nowik (FHA/PHSA) were officially appointed to UBC Clinical Faculty positions. Our clinical faculty continue to receive awards in recognition for their contributions to UBC (Tracey Pressey Killam Award, MUS teaching award), Blair Butler (Clinical Faculty Career Teaching award), and our profession (Nancy Kent, Western Region Award for outstanding contributions, SOGC). Both VIHA, PHSA and FHA MFM will be recruiting or have filled recruitment spots, that will lead to more clinical faculty positions. The clinical faculty continue to have a very strong presence in educational programs at all levels.

The Fellowship program remains strong under the exceptional leadership of Dr Tessier. The Program received full accreditation this year, and her tireless efforts deserves recognition.

The academic tract faculty continue to excel. Both Dr Alex Beristain and Dr Sarka Lisonkova were promoted to Associate Professors this year. Congratulations to both! Dr Hutcheon and Dr Joseph continue their world class work, and have been successful with recent tri-council and NIH grant applications. As evidenced by our Spring 2019, Divisional Review, the research productivity of this group is excellent. A spring Research Symposium identified areas of strength and opportunities for possible recruitments going forward. The Division will look for opportunities in Global Health, Placental Biology, Computational Biology, Data Science and Clinical trials Research just to name a few.

Dr Beristain (along with Dr Yong), is leading the renewal of the reproductive sciences program and we expect great things to come out of that.

The next academic year, will feature some transitions of educational roles, particularly in the undergraduate medical and residency levels.



Ken Lim, Division Head of Maternal Fetal Medicine

Division of Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

GREI Fellowship Accreditation

I believe our fellowship program ranks with the best in the country. The emphasis on excellence in clinical care and academia has led to all our graduates being employed in reputable institutions across the country. Niamh Tallon the fellowship directory and the department education Manager Leah Solomon have been major players in successfully passing accreditation for 8 more years. In addition to the GREI core curriculum, we ensure the adequate exposure of our learners to non-fertility reproductive endocrine disorders (polycystic ovary syndrome, hypogonadotropic hypogonadism, premature ovarian failure, pituitary dysfunction), and for the GREI subspecialty residents, additional exposure to pediatric and adult endocrinology. We are one of the few programs in the country to provide significant training in reproductive Surgery.

Mature Women's Health Professorship

I believe our fellowship program ranks with the best in the country. The emphasis on excellence in clinical care and academia has led to all our graduates being employed in reputable institutions across the country. Niamh Tallon the fellowship directory and the department education Manager Leah Solomon have been major players in successfully passing accreditation for 8 more years. In addition to the GREI core curriculum, we ensure the adequate exposure of our learners to non-fertility reproductive endocrine disorders (polycystic ovary syndrome, hypogonadotropic hypogonadism, premature ovarian failure, pituitary dysfunction), and for the GREI subspecialty residents, additional exposure to pediatric and adult endocrinology. We are one of the few programs in the country to provide significant training in reproductive Surgery.

The GREI division is working closely with the BCWHF and BCWH to start a clinical and academic program in Mature Women's Health.

- ✓ **Goal:** To create an endowed chair in Mature Women's Health
- ✓ **Rationale for the Program and Critical Patient Care Gap:** Currently, symptomatic women are often referred to one or more gynecologists for management and treatment is often significantly delayed. This obstacle to care has fueled a multi-million-dollar industry of treatments which are uncontrolled and unproven. Currently, in Vancouver, women receive care for menopausal concerns through a variety of resources, and often the focus is not mature women, but a larger population of patients. The norm is for the care of menopausal women to be fragmented and provided by multiple independent resources.
- ✓ **Academic opportunities:** Once established, it would offer an opportunity for leadership in education and research, and it would be a suitable facility to offer subspecialty (fellowship) training in mature women's health. It will promote excellence in Women's Health care through training new providers and pursuing investigation. Establishing a multidisciplinary clinic will be an important first step in generating academic activity in this largely ignored area of medical practice.
- ✓ **Role and Desired Qualities:** This endowment will support a mid-career clinician scientist who will lead a multidisciplinary, holistic and patient centered care through a multidisciplinary team of health care providers and researchers. The addition of a gynaecologist with mature women health expertise to BCWH will facilitate the development of a mature women health program that will be a unique and innovative clinical program in Canada. A clinician-scientist would also strengthen our capacity to carry out interdisciplinary population based, patient-oriented clinical research.

Collaboration and Access to Students/Trainees

- The addition of a clinician-scientist to the BCWH/ UBC will significantly catalyze collaborations to existing programs, such as:
- ✓ a Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS) Program:
 - ✓ b UBC Sexual Health Program
 - ✓ c BCWH Clinic Trial Center
 - ✓ d Gynecologic Surgery Program at BCWH

Alignment with Strategic Plan(s)

A mature women health unit at BCWH will demonstrate a strong alignment with the (1) the priorities identified by government and health sector partners needed to address provincial health care needs – i.e. healthy aging, interdisciplinary education, team based care, data sharing and (2) values outlined in the FoM Strategic plan. This unit will be a response to an unmet need in Society.

Conclusion: There is a gap and unmet need of patient-centered, holistic, interdisciplinary and team-based program for mature women health related needs. A desired goal is to have funding for an endowed Chair in Mature Women's Health, which would be the first such chair in West Canada and the second in Canada. This endowment will have significant patient care and academic impact.

Research Update

The division of REI is heavily invested in research and with the recent COVID-19 pandemic DR Bedaiwy thought to study The Impact of COVID-19 on Births Following Spontaneous Conception and Assisted Reproduction in British Columbia in a Prospective Population-Based Study. We received a catalyst grant from WHRI and a grant from Faring Pharmaceutical to conduct this study. Many effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have already been seen socially and economically. However, no studies have identified how the pandemic has affected fertility and reproductive outcomes. The negative psychological and financial impact of the pandemic could have led to a reduction in birth rates for various reasons, including financial insecurity and reduced access to antenatal care and to assisted reproductive technologies for infertile couples. Moreover, reproductive organs including testes, ovaries and wombs express the receptors needed for the COVID-19 to establish attachment with potential damage to the cells of these organs. As such, there could be negative effects on male and female gametes, embryos and the outcome of subsequent pregnancies. On the other hand, with people spending more time at home, there could be an increase in spontaneous conceptions. The aim of this study is to examine birth rates of spontaneously conceived babies and those conceived via assisted reproduction in British Columbia before and following the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we will evaluate the birth rates, patterns, and outcomes, as well as maternal morbidities before and after the pandemic. Insight into changes in birth outcomes, following both spontaneous and assisted conception, will provide information on an important but as yet unexamined aspect of the pandemic, and potentially inform patients, health professionals, and public health policy makers about the pandemic consequences on reproductive outcomes, family structure and population growth.



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