

WHRN

Fall • 2006

Volume • 02

For more
information
on the WHRN
contact:

Susan Dixon
Provincial
Networking
Coordinator
Women's Health
Research Network

Suite 201-601
W. Broadway
Vancouver
BC V5Z 4C2
t: 604.707.6378
f: 604.707.6399
e: sdixon@whrn.ca
web: www.whrn.ca

~

BACKGROUND

The Women's Health Research Network held its official launch on September 29th, 2005. Supported by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, the WHRN is one of eight BC-wide research networks created to stimulate growth and development of health research in the province. The WHRN was designed to act as a catalyst for new ideas, new collaborations, and new ideas, bringing together women's health researchers from a variety of disciplines to bridge geographic and sectoral gaps.

THE WHRN AT WORK

Research Clusters

The Co-Leaders of the WHRN are currently leading four research clusters designed to stimulate and support work on women's health research. Through 5 videoconferenced workshops held in Year 1, researchers across British Columbia had the opportunity to interact, learn more about key issues in women's health and gender and health research, and to participate in working groups focused on these province-wide initiatives:

1. Untangling Sex and Gender: Led by Joy Johnson, this initiative is aimed at furthering our understanding of the ways in which sex differences and gender influences are operationalised in current health research, determining the ways in which these factors are captured in the work of BC researchers and gaining an understanding of what funding agency review panel members are looking for. The working group is finalizing a sex and gender analysis primer and has plans for an educational tour of the province in the coming months.

2. Research Methodologies: This research cluster, led by Olena Hankivsky, brings together researchers and other key stakeholders working in the area of research methodologies to review and inventory past and current work on research methodologies at international, national, and provincial levels. This work will culminate in the drafting of a synthesis paper and two peer reviewed articles documenting new paradigms, methods, measurements, and innovative developments in gender mainstreaming, a province-wide workshop and regional presentations led by the network of researchers and collaborators working on this initiative, and the drafting of at least one major research proposal.

3. Women's Health Determinants: Led by Cecilia Benoit, this research cluster is an exploration of past and ongoing research into the determinants of women's health. Dr. Benoit hosted an international interactive workshop in April 2006 entitled The Comparative Perspectives on Gender, Health Care Work and Social Citizenship Rights. This workshop brought together a diverse group of people interested in a) investigating the gendered underpinnings of paid and unpaid health care work and the formal and informal delivery of health care in Canada and selected other high-income countries, and b) understanding the relationship between attractive work arrangements for care workers and quality care provision for recipients. The success of this workshop, and the collaborative atmosphere it generated, led to the leveraging of funds from CIHR's Institutes of Population and Public Health and Gender and Health and the joint sponsorship (along with MSFHR) of a special supplemental edition of the Canadian Journal of Public Health. This issue, titled Finding Dignity in Health Care and Health Care Work, will be undergoing review in the fall of 2006. Building further on the interest generated by this workshop at a provincial, national and even international level, Dr. Benoit has coordinated an interactive panel workshop entitled Stigma: A Hidden Women's Health Determinant. This discussion, to be held on November 8, 2006 at SFU Harbour Centre, will reveal how stigma is linked to social exclusion, prevailing gendered discourses, untimely use of health care and other services, lack of access to health care, poor self esteem and lower overall health status.

4. Women's Health Surveillance: Led by Lorraine Greaves, work has begun on the development of an online gendered data directory similar to that modeled by the Australian organization Women's Health Victoria. The data directory will include a range of indicators of women's health and will provide easier access to better information on women's health in BC. The directory will be designed for the use of all researchers associated with the WHRN, other MSFHR networks, policy makers, community based researchers and program/service planners.

Province-Wide Networking

Province-wide networking is a primary focus of the WHRN. In addition to the 5 videoconferenced workshops held in the network's inaugural year, the WHRN mounted a successful Summer Institute on June 14th and 15th, 2006 at picturesque Cecil Green Park House in Vancouver. Clinical and community researchers, scholars, students, trainees, and representatives of the policy sector enjoyed a wide variety of presentations and panel discussions on topics ranging from the treatment of depression during pregnancy to the health of marginalized girls and women to a session on voice and intersectionality in gender and health research. Entitled 'Taking The Pulse of Women's Health Research in BC, the Summer Institute provided an opportunity for those with an interest in women's health research to come together to learn, share, and network.

Website Development

Since fall 2005, the WHRN has maintained a user-friendly website. Currently featuring information on the network and its Co-Leaders, governance structure, coordination, networking events and valuable links to other key resources, the website is currently being expanded to include a rotating roster of researcher profiles of members of the Women's Health Research Network and other useful information and documents. Visit the website at www.whrn.ca.

Oversight Committee Development

An Oversight Committee representing a variety of institutions, regions, and perspectives is being developed to assist in planning and accountability for the WHRN. Members of the current WHRN advisory body are:

Sherrie Bade: Thompson Rivers University School of Nursing

Joan Botorff: University of British Columbia Okanagan School of Nursing

Linda Day: Aboriginal Women's Health and Healing Research Group

Tessa Graham: Population Health and Wellness Division, Ministry of Health Services

Dawn Hemingway: University of Northern British Columbia Social Work Program

Peter Leung: University of British Columbia/Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC/BCRI

Veronica Morris: Vancouver Island Health Authority (Research and Academic Development)

Sherry Mumford: Fraser Health Authority

Gisela Ruebsaat: BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs

Colleen Varcoe: University of British Columbia School of Nursing

NEW IN 2006-2007

Activities and events planned for the coming months include:

- » website expansion and development
- » seed grants and student grants programs for WHRN members
- » 'virtual' education sessions profiling key research in girls' and women's health being done in British Columbia
- » Untangling Sex and Gender Road Show, bringing the WHRN to institutions around BC and promoting the incorporation of sex and gender into health research
- » Interactive panel discussion – Stigma: A Hidden Women's Health Determinant
- » 2007 Winter and Summer Institutes

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stigma: A Hidden Women's Health Determinant – Interactive panel discussion

Join the WHRN on Wednesday, November 8th, 2006 - 1pm-3pm for an interactive panel discussion on stigma and its implications for the health of girls and women in British Columbia. This exciting event will take place at SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings, Room 1700 (Labatt Hall) in the heart of downtown Vancouver. The panel discussion is free to attend, and will also be made available through videoconference links to Thompson Rivers University, UBC Okanagan, and UNBC. For more information or registration, email sdixon@whrn.ca.

WHRN 2007 Winter Institute

Building on the successful 2006 Summer Institute, the WHRN is holding a one-day Winter Institute on Friday, February 9th, 2007 at Cecil Green Park House in Vancouver. More details to follow.

WHRN 2007 Summer Institute

The WHRN is planning a 2007 Summer Institute, to be held just ahead of the World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education. Please plan to join us at Cecil Green Park House on June 7th and 8th, 2007 for two days of knowledge exchange and networking opportunities.

WHAT THE WHRN CAN DO FOR YOU

The WHRN offers a wide variety of events open to all with an interest in women's health research.

Network members have exclusive access to:

- » Province-wide knowledge translation, promotion, and networking support
- » Special WHRN seed grants to enable the development of research proposals, grant applications, and collaborative research teams
- » WHRN trainee grants to support Master's and PhD-level students in their thesis or dissertation research
- » Support for bringing research teams together to develop proposals and work on research projects across distance with the use of new technologies

Additionally, WHRN members will be regularly featured in researcher profiles on the WHRN website and can present their new and ongoing work to a broad audience through events such as the virtual education sessions and the Winter and Summer Institutes.

To become a member of the Women's Health Research Network, contact Provincial Networking Coordinator

Susan Dixon at sdixon@whrn.ca or 604.707.6378

MISSION

- » To foster authentic, inclusive cross-sectoral linkages to increase research activity focused on the health of girls and women in British Columbia
- » To consolidate and further develop a program of research that crosses all pillars of health and policy research, supported by a range of activities and new technology
- » To broaden awareness of completed, ongoing, and future research projects and programs focused on women's health
- » To develop effective models for the brokerage of knowledge about sex differences and gender influences into practice and policy
- » To deliver interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral training aimed at increasing capacity for community-based researchers, students, and other health researchers to engage in the full range of women's health research
- » To develop research partnerships - nationally and internationally - as a way of raising the profile of women's health research in BC and attracting increased research funding to the province

MEMBERS The WHRN welcomes and includes:

- » Institutionally-based researchers from all pillars and disciplines
- » Research trainees and students
- » Community-based researchers
- » Community collaborators – i.e. grassroots initiatives and women's organizations
- » Service providers and directors working in the areas of health promotion, prevention, and treatment with an interest in evidence-based practice
- » Policy makers, including local and regional health authority representatives and others interested in evidence-based policy and planning
- » Individuals at large with an interest in women's health research

LEADERSHIP The WHRN operates under the collaborative leadership of 5 Co-Leaders:

- » **Cecilia Benoit**, Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Victoria and Senior Administrator for the Office of Vice-President, Research
- » **Lorraine Greaves**, Executive Director of the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, a Clinical Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at UBC and Director of the Women's Health Research Initiative at BC Women's
- » **Olena Hankivsky**, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, Faculty Associate in the Department of Women's Studies, and Director of the Institute for Critical Studies in Gender and Health at SFU
- » **Joy Johnson**, Professor in the School of Nursing and Co-Director of two research units (NEXUS and NAHBR) at UBC
- » **Nancy Poole**, Research Associate with the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and a provincial consultant on women's substance use research with BC Women's Hospital

STAFF The day-to-day operations of the WHRN are facilitated by:

Provincial Coordinator: Susan Dixon [sdixon@whrn.ca]

Site Coordinators:

Rodney Hunt [rhunt@sfu.ca]

Robin Repta [robin.repta@nursing.ubc.ca]

Leah Shumka [lshumka@uvic.ca]

**The Women's Health Research Network is funded by
the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research**



Michael Smith Foundation for
Health Research