



# Research News

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### PEARS Study

The PEARS study aims at expanding the knowledge available to the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH) and the Prevention & Early Active Return-to-Work Safely ([PEARS](#)) program by investigating the relationship between pain, depression, specific psychosocial and cognitive variables, and work outcomes in healthcare workers who are experiencing pain, discomfort, injury, or exposure and have registered in PEARS. By identifying the most significant predictors of work outcomes in injured workers and thus facilitating effective early intervention and safe and early return to work, the PEARS study aims to make an important contribution to OHSAH's outstanding work in promoting a culture of safety and wellness in the workplace.

The PEARS study is a research partnership between the University of British Columbia (UBC), OHSAH, Fraser Health Authority (FHA), and Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and is led by Dr. Marc Corbière (Principal Investigator) of Université de Sherbrooke and Dave Keen (Co-Principal Investigator), FHA.. Jennifer Wade is the site leader in VIHA.

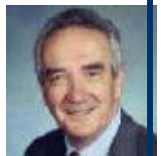
The PEARS study consists of three phases: 1) Phase 1: At the time of the participant's entry into the PEARS program, data is gathered regarding pain, and other variables from a series of questionnaires; 2) Phase 2: Eight week follow-up (end of PEARS treatment). Participants are asked to fill out all Phase 1 questionnaires again upon completing their treatment; 3) Phase 3: Six-month follow-up (after Phase 2). At this time, participants are asked to participate in a brief interview (i.e. 15 minutes, conducted either in person or over the phone), during which they are asked to answer a series of questions relating to specific work outcomes such as number of sick days, number of absentee days, and employment status throughout PEARS treatment.

To date, more than 100 people registered in PEARS programs (Phase 1) have been recruited with the intention to reach about 500 people at Phase 1.

For further information on this study contact Dr. Marc Corbière at [Marc.Corbriere@USherbrooke.ca](mailto:Marc.Corbriere@USherbrooke.ca)

### Message from the Director

Last year we submitted a proposal with UVic ( PI Cecilia Benoit) to CIHR for a study titled “Putting Health Knowledge to Action on Vancouver Island: The K-T Research Help Desk” Although we were not successful, we were just below the cut off for funding which encourages us to resubmit. The basic idea is to link clinicians in VIHA with faculty and students working together to answer health related questions.



A new initiative that we are starting this year will be Research Grand Rounds commencing May 29<sup>th</sup>. Further details are given in this newsletter. We hope to encourage VIHA researchers and UVic collaborators to present their work. Researchers interested in presenting their work should contact Wanda Martin so that we can complete the schedule for 08/09.

## What helps bereaved family caregivers with uncomplicated grief adjust to their loss?

Moira Cairns, an interdisciplinary master's student at the University of Victoria, is studying bereaved family caregivers' response to their loss. Approximately 50% of family caregivers seek help with their grieving process. While there has been work done on complicated grief (described as intrusive and distressing symptoms of grief lasting longer than 6 months), little attention has been paid to the remainder of the bereaved family caregiver population. Some suggestions have been made that those with uncomplicated grief do not need help from health care professionals (HCPs). Help would be unproductive and unnecessary and they can manage with own natural supports. However, it is unlikely that those with uncomplicated grief are a homogenous group and more likely that they experience a spectrum of distress in grief. Although there is evidence to suggest what is helpful for those with complicated grief, there is little evidence to suggest what is helpful for those with uncomplicated grief. Cairns is talking to approximately 15 bereaved family caregivers who cared for an adult at the end-of-life. In the early stages of data analysis, Cairns is recognizing the dynamic tension between loss and strength and the need to be fine as two themes emerging from the data. Discovering what is helpful in bereavement according to family caregivers will offer guidance to HCPs who encounter this population.

## VIHA Researcher Spotlight: Connie Harris



“The changes you want to see in the future, are things that you have to prove doing the research”, says Connie Harris, a perinatal clinical pharmacist at Victoria’s General Hospital (VGH). After completing her doctorate in Pharmacy at the University of Washington in 1982, Connie acquired a passion in working with mother’s and babes, and began to specialize in the perinatal area. After moving back to Victoria she accepted the position of pharmacist for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at VGH. Connie had the support of her employers to put more effort into research and writing. Connie and her pharmacy resident, along with nutrition, nursing and public health partners are presently working on a study that is examining whether a new vitamin D supplement product and extra vitamin D education has an effect on the compliance with administration in breastfed babies. “It is really important for breastfed babies and especially babies who reside in northern latitudes like Canada to receive Vitamin D, because the only way of making vitamin D in babies is through sun exposure.” Because of the concern of babies being so delicate, generally we are advised to avoid direct sun exposure and put sunscreen on them when they are a bit older. Breast milk doesn’t have enough Vitamin D for babies, so Vitamin D should be given as a supplement sometime during the first week of life and continue being administered throughout the first year of life. Connie has assisted with creating a multi-cultural DVD as a teaching tool for mothers. “By protecting our kids with Vitamin D in the first year of life, we may be protecting them from other chronic diseases, such as diabetes...those early years are so important.”

*To subscribe/unsubscribe to the newsletter or to suggest a feature or highlight your research, please contact: Wanda Martin  
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## Using the Concepts of Sex and Gender to Inform Research

Lenora Marcellus

Sex and gender are increasingly being recognized as important health determinants and essential aspects of health research and program planning. There is greater recognition now that both biological and socio-cultural factors contribute to health for both women and men. For example, recent research on cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and depression has identified significant differences among women and men with respect to the development and distribution of these conditions and also responses to their treatment.

The Child Youth and Family program and the Research and Evaluation Program recently welcomed Drs. Elana Brief and Colleen Reid from the BC Women's Health Research Network (WHRN) for a morning workshop in Victoria called "*Better Science with Sex and Gender: A primer for health research*". The WHRN is one of the health research networks funded by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (<http://www.whrn.ca/>).

Elana and Colleen reviewed the concepts of sex and gender and their measurement and applied them practically to the population of girls and women within VIHA. Participants represented a wide range of programs, including mental health, renal services, child youth and family, senior's health and population health. All participants were provided with a copy of a sex and gender research primer. This primer is available electronically at <http://www.whrn.ca/better-science-download.php>. Elana and Colleen also conducted a similar workshop in Comox, North Island College.

If you would like to find out more about the health of girls and women in VIHA or provincial initiatives related to women's health, please contact Lenora Marcellus ([lenora.Marcellus@viha.ca](mailto:Lenora.Marcellus@viha.ca)).

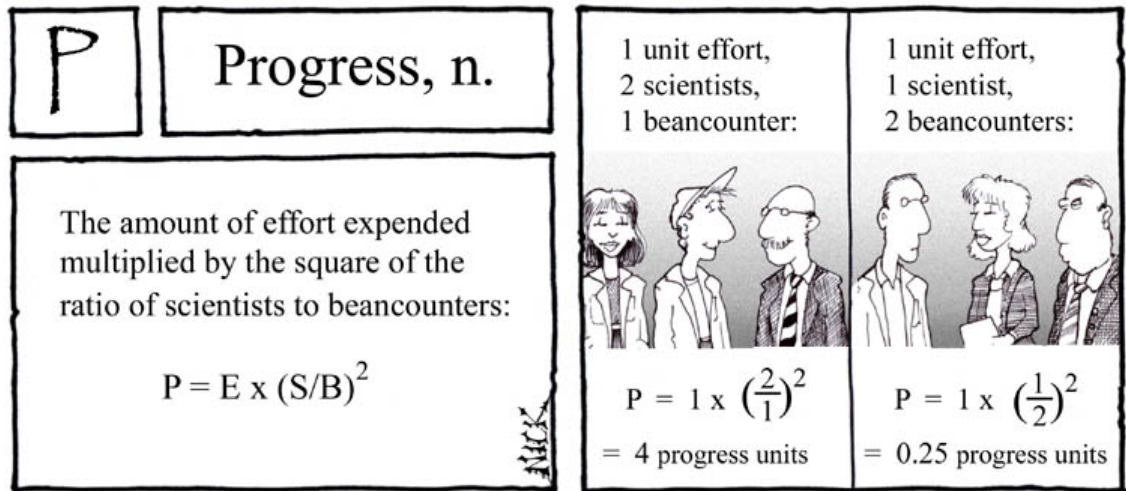
Here are a few selected websites with sex and gender specific information.

- Advancing the health of girls and women: A woman's health strategy for British Columbia (<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/whb/index.html>)
- Including gender in health planning: A guide for regional health authorities ([http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/admin/vh\\_external/pwhce/pdf/gba.pdf](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/admin/vh_external/pwhce/pdf/gba.pdf))
- The Source – women's health data directory ([http://www.womenshealthdata.ca/default\\_en.aspx](http://www.womenshealthdata.ca/default_en.aspx))

## UVIC School of Nursing Honour Society

At the University of Victoria, on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm in Room HSD A 240, the UVIC SON Honour Society will hold their Annual General Meeting with Dr. Betty Davies talking about "When a Loved One is Seriously Ill - How to Help the Children." Dr. Betty Davies is Professor, Department of Family Health Care Nursing, University of California San Francisco. Dr. Davies has gained international recognition for her work in this field through numerous publications, including two books (*Fading Away: The experience of transition in families with terminal illness* and *Shadows in the Sun: Experiences of sibling bereavement in childhood*) and through her leadership in helping to establish North America's first free-standing children's hospice in Vancouver, Canada. She has received numerous awards, including most recently, the Distinguished Career Achievement Award from the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association. Dr. Davies lecture is free and open to the public.

To subscribe/unsubscribe to the newsletter or to suggest a feature or highlight your research, please contact:  
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Cartoon by Nick D Kim, nearingzero.net.

### Research Grand Rounds

Research & Academic Development is pleased to announce Research Grand Rounds. This is an opportunity to learn about research being conducted in VIHA and make important research connections. The first presentation will be on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in the Woodward Room of Begbie Hall from 0800h-0900h. From there we will evaluate our process and begin monthly presentations in September. Our inaugural Rounds will be by the [Microanalysis Working Group](#) of the Communications Team on the Victoria Palliative Research Network. The topic is as follows:

#### *Myths about Communication*

*Most advice about breaking bad news and having difficult conversations with patients and families is experiential rather than experimental. This presentation will explore some of the myths, and using an evidence-based approach, present new research findings that will aid clinicians in this difficult area of practice.*

### Research Workshop Series

The Research Capacity Building Team would like to thank those who expressed interest in the research workshop series. Based on the feedback we received, we will be providing a 4-part series beginning in October 2008. We will run 2 of the 4 sessions as half day workshops and 2 will be shorter over the lunch hour. Our topics will be 1) Research Basics; 2) How to do a literature search; 3) Proposal writing; and 4) Research collaboration. We will be offering the ½ day workshops at the RJH site and the lunch hour sessions at both RJH and VGH.

### Fireside Chats

1. Healthy Aging Policies - Perspectives from Newfoundland/Labrador  
Friday, 18 April 2008, 1:00 PM — 2:30 PM PM (Eastern Time)
2. Climate Change and Communities: Active Transportation,  
Friday, 2 May, 2008, 1:00 - 2:30 PM PM (Eastern Time)
3. Food Insecurity: Community Solutions: a success story from the region of Waterloo  
Thursday, 15 May 2008, 01:00 PM — 03:00 PM (Eastern Time)

How to use the new Fireside Chat Registration Procedure via Login on <http://www.chnet-works.ca/>

To  
 subscribe/ unsubscribe to  
 the newsletter or to  
 suggest a feature or  
 highlight your research,  
 please contact:  
 Wanda Martin  
 Capacity-Building  
 Team  
 Research & Academic  
 Development  
 cap\_building@viba.ca

## Upcoming Events

### April

[Northern Health's Research & Evaluation Department 2nd Annual research days: From Evidence to Excellence in Rural Healthcare](#)

April 21, 22, & 23, 2008  
Terrace

[Interior Health's 3rd Annual Research Conference](#)

*From Research to Practice and Back Again*  
April 28-29, 2008  
Kelowna

### May

[Women's Health Research Network - Summer Institute 2008](#)

May 1 & 2, 2008  
Victoria

[BCEOHRN Spring Conference](#)

*Advancing research through innovative linkage of health and exposure data*  
May 2, 2008  
Vancouver

[BCPGA 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference](#)

*Making a difference ~ Bridging the gaps*  
May 1-3, 2008  
Cranbrook

[The ICAV Sixth International Symposium](#)

May 4 – 6, 2008  
Toronto & Peterborough, Ontario

[Community-University Partnerships: Connecting for Change](#)

May 4-7, 2008  
University of Victoria

[BCRRHRN Rural Health: Building Research Together](#)

May 13-14, 2008  
Prince George

[Canadian Congress on Leisure Research \(CCLR 12\)](#)

May 13–16, 2008  
Montreal, Quebec

[Positive Aging: An Interdisciplinary Team Approach for Health Professionals](#)

May 24 & 25, 2008  
Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown Hotel, Vancouver

[28th Annual CPS Conference](#)

[“Pain Through The Ages – Common Themes”](#)

May 27-30, 2008  
Victoria Conference Centre

[Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia and Mindscapes 2008](#)

May 30-31, 2008  
Emily Carr, Institute of Art and Design  
Granville Island, Vancouver

### June

[34th Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kettil Bruun Society](#)

June 2-6, 2008  
Victoria

[International Nursing Research Conference](#)

*Facing the Challenge of Health Care Systems in Transition*  
June 30-July 3, 2008  
Jerusalem, Israel

### August

[15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cancer Nursing](#)

August 17-21, 2008  
Singapore

### September

VIHA Research Day  
September 12, 2008  
Queen Alexandra Hospital Auditorium

### October

[Sixth International Symposium: Public Health & the Agricultural Rural Ecosystem](#)

October 19-23, 2008  
Saskatoon

### November

[Re-Imagining Health Services: Innovations in Community Health](#)

November 6-8, 2008  
Vancouver

[BC Injury Prevention Conference Partnering with the Public for Injury Prevention](#)

November 19-21  
Vancouver

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cap\_building@viha.ca

## **Do you have a research question that will benefit the delivery of care at VIHA?**

In partnership with the University of Victoria and funding from BC Child & Youth Health Research Network, Research & Academic Development is assisting to organize up to 12 graduate students to work on applied health research projects for health care professionals and decision makers. Research projects may include, but are not limited to: literature reviews, program evaluation, survey design, data collection, data analysis, and research proposal development.

We are currently accepting applied research questions for the fall term (September–December). Once you have completed the form, you will be contacted by Wanda Martin to discuss your project and it's suitability for this program.

To submit a question, please complete the attached form and email it to [wanda.martin@viha.ca](mailto:wanda.martin@viha.ca), or fax it to 370-8106.

Questions will be selected based on the ability to complete the project within 13 weeks and the strategic priorities of VIHA, the University of Victoria and the BC Child & Youth Health Research Network. Preference will be given but are not restricted to questions in the area of Child & Youth Health.

To ensure that the project is successful we require a 1-hour/week commitment (15 hours total) from each applicant. This time will be used to define the research project, provide guidance to the student as needed, and attend the student presentation at the end of the project.

Deadline: May 30th, 2008

For further information, please contact Wanda Martin at [wanda.martin@viha.ca](mailto:wanda.martin@viha.ca) or (250) 370-8111, ext 3630.

*Please distribute widely!*

## VIHA Knowledge Mobilization Project Proposal

**Project Title:**

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**Your name, department, and contact information:**

--

**Topic and Project Objective** (briefly describe the research objectives or question that your organization would like addressed):

--

**Project Description** - please describe the project and any progress that you have made in this work (e.g. new project, data collected, questionnaires selected, etc.) and tell us why is this project interesting for VIHA:

--

**Keywords** (please, list up to 10 keywords that describe your research interests as related to this project):

--

**Effect of project:** how will you use the findings to influence current practice in your practice?

--

**\* Does this study have ethics approval?**

**Proposed Activities for student:**

- Literature Review
- Program Evaluation
- Design of Survey
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Research Proposal development
- Develop plan to disseminate findings
- Other (please, describe):

**Participants/subjects or sources of data involved:**

- Staff
- Patients
- Other
- Charts
- Questionnaires already administered

**Expected deliverables:** what deliverables/outcomes do you hope for from the student after 13 weeks of work? (research report, data analyzed and presented in a spreadsheet format, list of recommendations...)