



The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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THE SPOTLIGHT

Updates from the UAB Center for Women's Reproductive Health

Spring 2022

A Message from Dr. Alan Tita

On behalf of the CWRH leadership team, I am thrilled to introduce the Spring Edition of the CWRH Spotlight! This edition highlights exciting activities and accomplishments during the last two quarters thanks to the dynamic efforts of CWRH membership and teams. Congratulations to all featured grant awardees, published authors, and new CWRH members! Note the upcoming CWRH seminars by outstanding national leaders and the links provided for members to share information about grants and publications. Register for the open house scheduled on May 27th and learn how to leverage the range of services available to you. Finally, help us make a difference by sharing with others interested in supporting women's and infant health including support for trainees. The "Give Now" tab will allow donations towards the work of CWRH. A great summer to all!



Alan Tita, M.D., Ph.D.



CWRH Open House

Join us for our upcoming Center for Women's Reproductive Health Virtual Open House on Friday, May 27, 2022 at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom.

[Register Now](#)

Highlights

CWRH NEJM Study Shows Treating Preexisting High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy Improves Maternal, Fetal Outcomes

A new study supported by the CWRH and published in The New England Journal of Medicine provides evidence that treating mild chronic hypertension with medication is beneficial and safe for moms and babies. The Chronic Hypertension and Pregnancy (CHAP) trial findings mark the first comprehensive, evidence-based data for treating non-severe forms of chronic hypertension during pregnancy.

[Read More](#)

Former CWRH Director, Dr. Robert Goldenberg, Recognized as a Giant in Obstetrics and Gynecology

Former director of the Center for Women's Reproductive Health and Charles E. Flowers Endowed Chair of the UAB Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Robert Goldenberg, has been recognized by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology as a "Giant in Obstetrics and Gynecology." He was also recently honored by the UAB Department of OB/GYN and the CWRH for a seminar he gave on [pregnancy outcomes in low-income countries](#).

[Read More](#)

UAB OB/GYN Receives 2021 Roy M. Pitkin Award for CWRH-Supported Research

The UAB Department of OB/GYN has been selected as a recipient of the 2021 Roy M. Pitkin Award. The winning research study, "Evaluation of a risk-stratified, heparin-based, obstetric thromboprophylaxis protocol," required heavy involvement from multiple CWRH members.

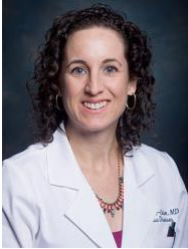
CHAP Trial Receives \$12.8 Million for Follow-up

UAB and partner sites in the Chronic Hypertension and Pregnancy, or CHAP, consortium received \$12.8 million from the National Institutes of Health to continue following women with chronic hypertension post-partum.

[Read More](#)

[Read More](#)

CWRH UWIRC Pilot Grant Awards



PI: Dr. Jodie Dionne

Co-I: Dr. Akila Subramaniam

Title: A Rational Approach to the Identification of New Treatment Options to Prevent Congenital Syphilis: Pharmacokinetics of High Dose Amoxicillin with and without Probenecid in Pregnant Women

Funded By: UWIRC | **Funding Start Date:** 10/1/2021

OB/GYN Pilot Grant Awards Administered by CWRH



PI: Dr. Rachel Sinkey

Co-I: Dr. Brian Casey, Dr. Alan Tita, Dr. Akila Subramaniam

Title: Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease Biomarkers Among Women With Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy 5 – 10 years Postpartum

Funded By: UAB OB/GYN | **Funding Start Date:** 10/1/2021



PI: Dr. Ricardo Azziz

Co-I: Dr. Barbara Gower

Title: A Novel epigenetic mechanism underlying adipose tissue dysfunction, inflammation, and insulin resistance in PCOS

Funded By: UAB OB/GYN | **Funding Start Date:** 10/1/2021



PI: Dr. Carly Scalise

Co-I: Dr. Sarah Cooper

Title: WNT/b-catenin signaling axis regulates chemo-induced immune evasion

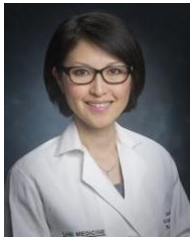
Funded By: UAB OB/GYN | **Funding Start Date:** 11/1/2021



PI: Dr. Russell Stanley
Co-I: Dr. Isuzu Meyer, Dr. Holly Richter
Title: RCT Comparing Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS) in Combo w/Mirabegron to PTNS + Placebo
Funded By: UAB OB/GYN | **Funding Start Date:** 11/1/2021

Funded/ Awarded Grants

The following are funded/ awarded grants since September 2021 that are supported by the CWRH.



PI: Dr. Isuzu Meyer (R03)
Title: The Impact of Hip Exercises on Pelvic Floor Muscle Strength and Function as a Potential Non-Surgical Management for Urinary Incontinence in Older Women
Funded By: NIA/NIH



PI: Dr. Namasivayam Ambalavanan (UG1)
Title: UAB Clinical Site HEAL Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Pharmacological Treatments
Funded By: NICHD/NIH



PI: Dr. Rebecca Arend (VA IPA)
Title: DETECT Study - Discovery and Evaluation of Tests for Endometrial Cancer in Tampon
Funded By: National Institutes of Health/DHHS



PI: Dr. Masakazu Kamata (R21)
Title: Eradication of Brain/CNS HIV Reservoirs via Anti-HIV Gene-Modified Macrophages
Funded By: NIMH/NIH



PI: Dr. David Kimberlin
Title: Identification of Biomarkers of Audiologic Outcomes in Congenital Cytomegalovirus Infection
Funded By: Oxford Immunotec, Inc.



PI: Dr. Myriam Peralta-Carcelen (U01)
Title: HEALthy Brain and Child Development Study at UAB and UA
Funded By: NIDA/NIH



Site PI: Dr. Akila Subramaniam (R01)
Title: Comparing Game-Facilitated Interactivity to Genetic Counseling for Prenatal Screening Education
Funded By: NHGRI/NIH with University of Utah



Site PI: Dr. Alan Tita
Title: NICHD MFMU PASC-PREG: Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Pregnant Patients and Their Offspring
Funded By: NIH/University of Utah as part of the COVID-19 national Recover study

Multiple Investigators:

MPIs: Dr. Waldemar Carlo, Dr. Alan Tita, Dr. Akila Subramaniam, Dr. Vivek Lal
Title: Multi-site Efficacy and Safety Trial of Intrapartum Azithromycin in Low- and Middle-Income Countries ('LMICs'): Ancillary microbiome and resistome study
Funded By: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/FNIH

MPIs: Drs. Bertha Hidalgo, Hemant Tiwari, and Alan Tita
Title: Epigenetic Biomarkers of Preeclampsia Risk Among Mothers with Chronic Hypertension
Funded By: NHLBI/NIH

MPIs: Drs. Alan Tita, Jeffrey Szychowski, and Suzanne Oparil (R01)
Title: Pregnancy as a Window to the Future: Outcomes of Antihypertensive Therapy and Superimposed Preeclampsia in Pregnant Women with Mild Chronic Hypertension (CHAP Maternal Follow-up Study)
Funded By: NHLBI/NIH

In addition, **Dr. Janet Turan** (UAB MPI), professor in the UAB School of Public Health and director of the UAB Sparkman Center for Global Health, supported by many CWRH investigators and others, was **funded by FIC/NIH** for a grant application entitled "[**Integrated Networks of Scholars in Global Health Research Training \(INSIGHT\)**](#)." In partnership with the University of Maryland, Baylor College of

Medicine, and University of Pittsburg, the goal of INSIGHT is to train pre- and post-doctoral global health scholars from the US and partner countries.

[Submit Awarded Grants to be Featured](#)

Grant Submissions

Drs. Sara Gould (PI), Chase Cawyer, and Akila Subramaniam

Title: 3D Power Doppler US and Metabolic Measures of Placental Perfusion in Exercise; NIH/DHHS

A large multidisciplinary team of UAB/CWRH investigators including Drs. M. Baskin, A. Battarbee, H. Budhwani, W. Carlo, B. Casey, G. Dutton, M. Fouad, B. Hildago, B. Lewis, P. Munter, I. Scarinci, J. Szychowski, C. Travers, V. Shukla, R. Sinkey, A. Subramaniam, A. Tita, and M. Wingate, along with investigators from Northwestern University, Ohio State University, University of Chapel Hill, and University of Pennsylvania constituted a collaborative network to respond to the “American Heart Association, Health Equity Research Network on Prevention of Hypertension” call for proposals. Proposals focused on disparities in maternal-infant health outcomes. The team’s application included five projects (one per site) and a coordinating center at CWRH. *Submitted 04/21/2022 for \$20 million over four years.*

Funding Opportunities

Be on the lookout for the upcoming CWRH request for pilot grant applications to be released May 27, 2022!

Administrative supplement opportunities in women’s health:

- Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Research on the Health of Women of Understudied, Underrepresented and Underreported (U3) Populations (Admin Supp Clinical Trial Optional) | [Click here](#)
- Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Implementing a Maternal Health and Pregnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone Program ([IMPROVE](#)) | [Click Here](#)

CWRH will help facilitate applications by matching to an eligible parent grant. Contact the team at cwrh@uabmc.edu for additional information and if interested!

Newest Members

Members of the Center for Women's Reproductive Health have a UAB faculty appointment (or its equivalent) and are from Schools across the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Center members are engaged in research encompassing women's health across the lifespan and have prior or current academic collaborations with Center personnel or members. Research includes the spectrum of basic, translational, clinical (including interventions) and epidemiological associations.

Please join in welcoming our newest CWRH members!

- **Natalie R. Gassman, Ph. D**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology, Associate Professor
- **Sara Gould, M.D., MPH**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Associate Professor
- **Mythreye Karthikeyan, Ph.D.**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Pathology, Associate Professor
- **Candace Knight, Ph.D. R.N.**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB School of Nursing | Department of Family, Community & Health Systems, Associate Professor
- **Christina Muzny, M.D., MSPH**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Medicine, Associate Professor
 - UAB School of Public Health | Department of Epidemiology, Associate Professor
- **Olivia Van Gerwen, M.D. MPH**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Associate Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Medicine, Assistant Professor
- **Christina Wilson, Ph.D, R.N., WHNP-BC**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Associate Scientist**
 - UAB School of Nursing | Department of Acute, Chronic & Continuing Care, Assistant Professor
- **Karina Yoon, Ph.D.**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology, Associate Professor
- **Dan E. Berkowitz, M.D.**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Senior Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Care, Alfred Habeeb Professor and Chair
- **Gerald McGwin, Ph.D., MPH**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Senior Scientist**
 - UAB School of Public Health | Department of Epidemiology, Professor
- **Ryan Melvin, Ph.D.**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Associate Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Care, Assistant Professor

- **Brandy Pernell, DNP**
 - CWRH Appointment: **Associate Scientist**
 - UAB Heersink School of Medicine | Department of Pediatrics, Assistant Professor

If you know someone working in women's health, they may be eligible for CWRH membership! Please send nominations to CWRH@uabmc.edu, and the team will review and reach out.

Publications

- We are excited to feature the recent publications of the CWRH-UWIRC members! Congratulations!
- [Click here to view publications from September 2021 to May 2022.](#)

[Submit Recent Publications to be Featured](#)

Upcoming Events

CWRH June Seminar Series



Dr. Michal A. Elovitz

CWRH June Seminar Series Welcomes Dr. Michal A. Elovitz of University of Pennsylvania

Seminar to take place on June 24, 2022.

[Click here](#) to stay up to date on additional information.

CWRH August Seminar Series



Dr. Dee E. Fenner

CWRH August Seminar Series Welcomes Dr. Dee E. Fenner of University of Michigan

Seminar to take place on August 26, 2022.

[Click here](#) to stay up to date on additional information.

The CWRH UWIRC sponsors a monthly reproductive health seminar series which supports the training of investigators interested in women's reproductive health, both locally and globally. The series includes quarterly expert invited guests.

In case you missed one, [click here to view previous guests and seminars.](#)

CWRH Community Service

In February of 2022, UAB and the CWRH joined in a cooperative agreement with LifeSouth Cord Blood Bank to offer all eligible women delivering at UAB the opportunity to donate their umbilical cord blood for banking purposes to be used for transplants to treat cancers and other disorders. After consent, CWRH staff confirm eligibility and assist with acquisition and processing of donated blood.

LifeSouth Cord Blood Bank is a community-based public cord blood bank that collects and stores umbilical cord blood for the purpose of clinical cures and research. Since its inception, LifeSouth has provided cord blood units for transplant in 30 states and 19 countries.

In just over two months, UAB has donated more than 100 units of umbilical cord blood for analysis and possible banking. Thanks to the efforts of our UAB and CWRH teams, UAB is already the top donating hospital in the region.

Your Gifts Make a Difference

The overall goal of the CWRH is to foster interdisciplinary collaborations across UAB to improve women's reproductive health (RH) and survival and promote equity in outcomes, particularly for minority and under-served women (including those in rural Alabama). A core goal is to facilitate collaboration between UAB researchers and developing scholars interested in women's RH.

To accomplish our goals, the CWRH must maintain and continue to foster research funding opportunities while investing in investigators and trainees and their affiliated divisions, departments, and schools. We invite you to help support our research initiatives including supporting a fund to support trainee research. With your help, we can continue to lead the way for women's RH research and make a difference in the lives of women now and in the future. Please share with potential donors.

[Give Now](#)

To submit a story, highlight, publication, or grant to be featured, please email cwrh@uabmc.edu.

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