



Upcoming IWH Research Development Group Meetings

- Addiction and Women's Health Research Development Meeting: October 17, 2025 at 3:00pm
- Nutrition and Women's Health Research Development Group Meeting: October 23, 2025 at 11:00am
- Intimate Partner Violence & Sexual Assault Research Development Group Meeting: October 24, 2025 at 10:00am
- Female Athlete Research Development Group: November date TBD
- Cancer in Women Research Development Group: November date TBD
- Perinatal Health Research Development Group Meeting: November date, TBD

To be added to the list for any of the Research Development Groups or to suggest a new group, please contact molly.hyer@vcuhealth.org.

Featured Faculty of the Month

Please join us in congratulating **Heather Jones!**



Heather Jones, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and is the Director of Trainee Development for IWH. She is a clinical psychologist and has spent her career mentoring the next generation of clinical psychologists and medical professionals focused on the care of women and children. She was [featured](#) for her recent \$3.6 million in federal grants to expand pro bono behavioral health care and train the next generation of practitioners. Her impact through her work on women's mental health and student training has been a tremendous asset to the field and the university.

Help us celebrate excellence by nominating standout faculty or yourself to be the next **IWH Affiliate Faculty of the Month**. Use the [Newsletter Submission Form](#), and be sure to include 1-2 sentences highlighting their impact, achievements, or what makes their work stand out.

We are proud to announce our new BIRCWH Scholars:



- **Jacqueline Britz, MD, MPSH** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine & Population Health. Her BIRCWH project is titled, “Bright Spot Communities and Community Asset Mapping: Utilizing Geospatial Mapping and Community Based Participatory Research to Address Disparities in Opioid Mortality for Women and Children.
- **Alexandra DeJong Lempke, PhD, ATC** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. Her BIRCWH project is titled, “Sex Differences in Hip Muscle Adaptations and the Link to Future Injury Following Acute First-Time Lateral Ankle Sprains.”
- **Samuel Walton, PhD, ATC** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. His BIRCWH project is titled, “Examining the Effects of Aerobic Physical Activity on Multimodal Brain Health Outcomes by Sex and Concussion History in Military Service Members and Veterans.”



News from IWH leadership and affiliate faculty

Linda Burkett, MD, MSc, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and former BIRCWH Scholar, was awarded an NIH K23 award focused on improving long-term outcomes in sacral neuromodulation in those with urinary urgency and voiding dysfunction.

Kelsey Hagan, PhD, LP, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and former BIRCWH Scholar, was awarded an NIH K23 grant for her project focused on using a neurocomputational approach to explore the development of bulimia nervosa in adolescents.

Carolyn Hawley, PhD, CRC, a Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, was featured in VCU News for her research on more effective [outreach and prevention strategies](#) for problem gambling.

Ann Haynos, PhD, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology, is the recipient of one of [VCU's National/International Recognition Awards](#) (NIRA) and will be recognized at the Faculty Recognition Gala on October 21st.

Wally Smith, MD, a Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine and Director of the VCU Adult Sickle Cell Disease program was featured in a [VCU News](#) story detailing how his team's groundbreaking work helps transform patient lives.

Nicholas Thomson, PhD, an Associate Professor in the Department of Surgery and Director of Research for the Injury and Violence Prevention Program received a \$3 million grant from the NIH to lead the [nation's largest federally funded study](#) on how virtual reality can prevent violence among high-risk youth.

Dr. Robert Downs, MD was [honored by NBC 12 On Your Side for their Acts of Kindness](#) program. A very well-deserved recognition!

Upcoming University Events

- VCU Wright Center Research Day: October 9, 2025 from 9:00am-3:00pm in the Larrick Student Center. **Dr. Jacqueline Britz**, a current BIRCWH scholar at IWH, will be one of the keynote speakers.
- The Wright Center's Discovery Dialogues Series, "Early Life Stress, Immune Function, and Energy: Lessons from Women Living with HIV," presented by Hannah Stadtler will be held on Monday, October 12th from 12:00-1:00pm. Please [register](#) for the Zoom here.
- Commonwealth of Virginia Cancer Research Conference: November 14-15. [Abstracts](#) are due October 1st.

Funding Opportunities

IWH is looking for faculty interested in submitting proposals for the funding opportunities below. Please reach out to molly.hyer@vcuhealth.org if interested.

- VCU Translational Science Pilot Grants
 - Application deadline 11/1/25
 - \$25,000 for one-year to support innovative research that investigates ways to make clinical and translational research faster, more efficient, and more impactful.
 - Contact Dr. Pamela Dillon (pmdillon@vcu.edu) with any questions.
- [Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project Grants](#) (newly reinstated by NIH)
 - Innovative projects that represent a change in research direction for early stage investigators (no preliminary data allowed)
 - Budgets are not limited but need to reflect the needs of the project
 - 5-year study

Recruitment Corner

Are you looking to recruit participants for active studies? Please fill out the [Recruitment Corner Form](#) if you are interested in having your study included in the newsletter.

- "Health Indicators, Training, and Performance Among Endurance Athletes"
 - Looking for adults enrolled in an upcoming endurance event
 - Inclusion criteria: English-speaking adults (18 years and older) enrolled in an upcoming endurance event
 - 1 confidential remote survey (~10 minutes to complete)
 - <https://redcap.vcu.edu/surveys/?s=EE4CW7XX7F7YPW4H>
 - No study compensation
- "Role of Estrogen Formulation and Route of Delivery on Skeletal Outcomes in Functional Hypothalamic Amenorrhea"
 - Looking for female participants who have stopped have menstrual periods
 - Inclusion criteria: ages 14-30, fewer than 3 menstrual periods in the past 6 months

- Exclusion criteria: current hormonal contraception/medications, major surgeries planned over the next 18 months, pregnancy or planning to become pregnant in the next 2 years
- 9 study visits over 12 months at the University of Virginia Medical Center
- Participants will be compensated up to \$925 total and up to \$25 for travel

Follow our new social media pages!

The VCU Institute for Women's Health has a new social media presence on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). Connect with us to stay up to date on the latest IWH news!

IWH Training Survey

- Please complete this [survey](#) to help us gather data on training and mentoring activities of IWH Affiliate Faculty. Contact Dr. Heather Jones (hjones7@vcu.edu) with any questions.

Do you have exciting news to share? We want to hear from you! Please share any recent career developments (grants, publications, promotions, media stories) using the [Newsletter Submission Form](#). We will feature these highlights in the next IWH newsletter.