

NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH)

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Office of Research on Women's Health

Office of the NIH Director

National Institutes of Health

Department of Health and Human Services



National Institutes of Health
Office of Research on Women's Health

orwh.od.nih.gov | #2018BIRCWH | #SABV | @NIH_ORWH

Background on ORWH



- ORWH was established in September 1990 in response to congressional, scientific, and advocacy concerns that a lack of systemic and consistent inclusion of women in NIH-supported clinical research.
- ORWH addresses gaps in scientific knowledge about women's health across the lifespan, increases the number of scientists pursuing investigations with a scientific design that would reveal sex/gender differences in outcomes, and funds meritorious research.



BIRCWH Program Locations across the Nation

FY 2000 – FY 2018

- 46 institutions awarded grants
- >700 junior faculty supported
- 20 current, active grants

 Institutions with BIRCWH Programs in 2018



Trans-federal Research Collaboration, 2008-2011

- Research collaborations between the NIH, the Department of Defense Centers of Excellence in Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies.
- Partnership hosted four annual scientific conferences that focused on traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic Stress Disorder, co-morbid conditions including chronic pain, substance abuse, alcoholism, as well as addressing sex/gender and race/ethnic differences; creating new funding opportunities.



Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury in Women

Research conference supported by NINDS & ORWH

- Exploring sex differences in TBI has been difficult in the past because women have historically been under-represented in TBI clinical trials.
- In addition, preclinical studies have often excluded females or have used ovariectomized rather than intact animals, leading to an incomplete understanding of TBI in females.
- Although more data and studies are needed, it is clear from studies that sex differences in TBI exist, and can influence outcomes.
- Some fields of TBI research, such as sports- and military-related TBI, are further along than others, due to increased funding and public interest.



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Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury in Women

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- Clinical neuroimaging can be useful in TBI research, but there is a need for standardization of assessment methods and analysis as different research groups are using different approaches, making it difficult to derive conclusions based on the data.
- Despite increasing involvement of women in the military and in combat roles, many military studies include only a very small proportion of females, or exclude females altogether.
- Partner-abused women are a unique group of TBI sufferers because of repetitive injuries over time, and strangulation. However, no national TBI prevalence estimates exist and there is a dearth of research funding dedicated to this area.



Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury in Women

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- Some research suggests that more women veterans and service members who sustained TBI exhibit depression, PTSD, and other disorders than men, emphasizing the need for increased inclusion of females in these studies.
- There are sex differences the brain's response after TBI; therefore, “one-size-fits-all” approaches may need to be replaced with sex- and age-appropriate treatment and rehabilitation strategies.
- *NINDS Contact: Dr. Diana Cummings; Email: diana.cummings@nih.gov*



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The Pain Management Collaboratory (PMC)

Jointly supported by the NIH, DoD, and the VA

- The goal of the PMC is to develop the capacity to implement cost-effective large-scale pragmatic clinical research in military and veteran health care delivery organizations focusing on non-pharmacological approaches to pain management and other comorbid conditions.
- Approaches include mindfulness/meditative interventions, movement interventions (e.g., structured exercise, tai chi, yoga), manual therapies (e.g., spinal manipulation, massage, acupuncture), psychological & behavioral interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy), & integrated models of multi-modal care.
- Eleven pragmatic clinical trials will be funded that focus on large-scale, cost-effective, pragmatic trials conducted in military and VA healthcare systems.



Federal Agencies Involved in the NIH-DoD-VA Pain Management Collaboratory

- NIH: NCCIH, NIDA, NIAAA, NICHD (NCMRR), ORWH, NINR, and OBSSR
- DoD: Clinical Rehabilitation Medicine Research Program (CRM RP), and Military Operational Medicine Research Program (MOMRP)
- VA: Health Service Research and Development (HSRD)
- <https://painmanagementcollaboratory.org/>





The Pain Management Collaboratory Outcomes

- **Primary:** pain and pain reduction, ability to function in daily life, quality of life, and pain medication usage, reduction, or discontinuation.
- **Secondary:** assessing comorbid conditions or those co-occurring with high frequency in this population.



Post-Doctoral Fellow at ORWH

Supported by Travis Air Force Base and
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences



- First fellow ever to be supported via this mechanism
- Duration: 2 Years, with quarterly travel to ORWH – visits of 2 week duration
- Focus: Policy and Strategic Planning
- Training elements
 - Implementation and Evaluation of ORWH Strategic Plan
 - Participating in developing implementation and evaluation strategies
 - Individual Development Plan
 - Exposure to a variety of policy efforts within the ORWH
 - NIH Course work
 - Policy paper related to polycystic ovary syndrome
- *ORWH Contact: Samia Noursi, PhD; samia.noursi@nih.gov*



The 2019-2023 Trans-NIH Strategic Plan for Women's Health Research will be published in early 2019

Guiding Principles



Populations + inclusion
(esp. health disparity populations)



Multiple perspectives
(esp. diverse research perspectives)



Multi-level factors
(considered across the life course)

Strategic Goals



Advance rigorous research that is relevant to the health of women



Develop methods & leverage data sources that consider sex & gender



Enhance dissemination & implementation of evidence to improve the health of women



Promote training & careers to advance science for the health of women



Improve evaluation of research that is relevant to the health of women

2019-2023



**ADVANCING SCIENCE FOR THE HEALTH OF WOMEN: 2019-2023
Trans-NIH Strategic Plan for Women's Health Research**

<https://orwh.od.nih.gov/about/advancing-science-health-women-2019-2023>

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