

# The Women's Health Study: From Adolescence to Adulthood

2014

## From the Director:



Dear Participants,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to contribute to this important study. It is because of you that clinicians and scientists are able to advance our knowledge of women's health and the important factors that enhance well-being.

This has been a busy year for the study and your support has been invaluable. Each individual who participates in this study provides critical and unique information, and we thank you for providing your piece to the Women's Health puzzle. You are irreplaceable!

If you have not already done so, you will be receiving your annual follow-up questionnaire soon. This questionnaire will focus on changes that you have experienced over the past year in your health and activities, and this year's questionnaire is shorter. Each update from you is extremely important. It allows us to capture the complete picture of what factors over time, from adolescence through adulthood, are best for resilience and maximum health.

Thank you again for your participation in the *Women's Health Study: From Adolescence to Adulthood*. We are proud to focus on women's health and well-being with your partnership. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact a member of the study team through email or by phone.

Sincerely,

Marc R. Laufer  
Director

## Gift Cards

You will receive gift cards once you complete all the questionnaires and samples to say thank you for your time. If you have questions about your gift cards, please call or email us.



Boston Center for Endometriosis



## Where we came from...

Established in 2012 by Dr. Marc Laufer and Scientific Director, Dr. Stacey Missmer, the Boston Center for Endometriosis (BCE) brings together internationally recognized leaders in the field of endometriosis from renowned hospitals, including Boston Children's Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital. The Center focuses on exceptional clinical care, research, and education.

[www.bostoncenterendometriosis.org](http://www.bostoncenterendometriosis.org)



## Quick Facts

Sponsored by the BCE, the Women's Health Study: From Adolescence to Adulthood (WHS) explores health topics that affect women over the lifespan.

Our main focus is the creation of a *biorepository* and *database* to serve as a resource for clinical investigators and scientists at Boston Children's Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital and other institutions.

It is the first *longitudinal study* of its kind, gathering information and biologic samples from women in their teens and throughout their adulthood to be used for unprecedented research advancement on women's health.

## Words to know

*Biorepository*: a collection of samples (like blood, urine and saliva) stored in freezers to be used for research at a later time.

*Database*: A file or set of files that store information collected from participants

*Longitudinal Study*: A type of research study that involves collecting the same types of data/samples over time. It allows researchers to track changes that occur over time.

*Endometriosis*: a gynecologic condition where endometrial tissue normally found in the uterus is found growing outside of the uterus.

## New Findings

Our recent investigations have focused on characteristics that influence endometriosis in adolescents and adults.

- We published a comprehensive study solidifying understanding that girls and women with endometriosis tend to be lean and with a low waist to hip ratio (Shah, Human Reprod 2013).
- We discovered that foods rich in folate, vitamin E, or vitamin C may decrease risk of endometriosis (Darling, J Endo 2013). In addition, women may benefit from healthy sun exposure and diets rich in vitamin D (Harris, Amer J Epidemiol 2013).
- We expanded this diet research to focus on adolescents. At the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) Annual Meeting held in October 2013, Dr. Jamie Nodler presented research suggesting that eating dairy products rich in vitamin D as well as yogurt in particular during adolescents may decrease endometriosis.

This will help you to understand why we ask all of those food questions! Your contribution may help us to solidify a cure or prevention related to diet and vitamins.

## Time spent in front of the television can directly relate to BMI

Research from Harvard University found that more time in front of the TV was directly related to a higher BMI (body mass index, a measure of your weight in relation to your height). The same was true for time in front of other digital media like video games and movies. Researchers found that spending more time in front of the TV meant more time seeing advertisements for food, and this influenced individuals' food choices. People may also eat more when they are distracted by the TV.

*Falbe J, Rosner B, Willett W, Sonnevile K, Hu F, Field A; Adiposity and Different*

## Everything in Moderation...

Individuals who overeat and/or binge eat during their adolescent years are at higher risk of becoming obese as adults according to researchers at Harvard School of Public Health. Data were collected from over 16,000 men and women who were followed from early adolescence into adulthood.

*Sonneville K, Horton N, Micali N, Crosby R, Swanson S, Solmi F, Field A; Longitudinal Associations Between Binge Eating and Overeating and Adverse Outcomes Among Adolescents and Young Adults. Jama Pediatrics, Feb 2013 Vol 167, 149-155.*

## Staff spotlight: Sarah

Sarah Karevicius joined the team in January 2013 as a Research Assistant. She enrolls participants in the study, processes samples in the lab, collects samples from surgeries and enters information into our database.



"I really enjoy meeting and enrolling participants in person. It gives me a chance to meet new people and reminds me why what I do as a research assistant is important," she says.

Sarah received her bachelor's degree from Wheaton College in Norton, MA in Biology and has worked in the Longwood Medical area for the past three years. She's looking forward to continuing a career in medicine and hopes to become a nurse practitioner.

Sarah enjoys drawing, painting and photography. She can also be found jogging along the Charles River (as long as it's not too cold!) and cheering on the Boston sports teams.

## Future Plans

- We plan to launch a diet study to explore nutrition as a way to manage symptoms of endometriosis.
- We are working with Dorothee Goldman of Oratel Diagnostics to learn more about saliva and we hope to create a diagnostic tool for endometriosis that does not require surgery.

## Way to go, team!

Congratulations to BCE trainees Drs. Wayne Lin and Liz Poole. Their work was awarded the In-Training prize for best endometriosis research at the American Society of Reproductive Medicine annual meeting.

## Stay connected!

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