



TRAINEE RESEARCH DAY 2025

Event Booklet

June 12, 2025
8:15 am to 5:00 pm

VGH Paetzold
Auditorium, 899 West
12 Ave, Vancouver

A hybrid event to showcase the exciting trainee research on gynecologic cancers happening around British Columbia.



info@gynecancerinitiative.ca



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[Gynecologic Cancer Initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gynecologic-cancer-initiative)



www.gynecancerinitiative.ca

AGENDA

Trainee Research Day 2025

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8:15 Registration

Light Breakfast Served

8:50 Housekeeping and Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Gillian Hanley, Associate Professor at UBC and Chair of the GCI Trainee Research Day Committee

9:00 Welcome & Opening Remarks

Dr. Teresa S.M. Tsang, Executive Director of VCHRI and Associate Dean of Research of UBC Faculty of Medicine

9:10 Keynote Talk

Unveiling the Gap: Addressing Sexual Health in Gynecologic Cancer Survivorship

Dr. Melanie Altas, Gynaecologist and Clinical Associate Professor at UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Director of the BC Centre for Vulvar Health at VGH, Sexual Medicine Consultant at BC Cancer

Introduced by Arabella Helgason, Master's Student, UBC WACH

10:00 Survivorship and Quality of Life Presentations

Moderated by Arabella Helgason, Master's Student, UBC WACH

Nisha Marshall, Research Coordinator, UBC OBGYN

Evaluating a digital health tool, eSense-Cancer, for sexual difficulties after gynecologic cancer

Ella Barrett-Chan, Medical Student, UBC Medicine

Window of opportunity for cancer prevention: Metachronous BRCA-associated breast and ovarian cancers in British Columbia

10:25 Coffee Break

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10:40 Diagnostics and Therapeutics Presentations: Part 1

Moderated by Sofia Serrano, Undergraduate Student, UBC Biochemistry

Maryam Asadi, Post-Doctoral Fellow, UBC SBME

OCEAN Challenge: Advancing AI for Generalized Ovarian Cancer Diagnosis

Tsz Yin Lam, Master's Student, UBC IOP

Development of humanized PDX mouse model for high grade serous ovarian cancer

Amal M. EL-Naggar, MD/PhD, BCCRI

A Spoiled Egg Laid by the Uterus That Ovary Hatched: Rethinking Clear Cell Ovarian Carcinoma through the Lens of Transsulfuration

Chirag Maan, Undergraduate Student, BCCRI

G6PD-dependent metabolism as a potential targetable pathway in ARID1A mutant gynecological cancers

11:30 Lunch & Career Panel

A conversation with Dr. Jonathan Simkin (Director of BC Cancer Registry), Dr. Kyla Hingwing (Research and Innovation Manager at Genome BC), Saeideh Maleki (Medical Science Liaison at Bayer Inc.), and Dr. Sarah Fielden (Director, Monitoring and Evaluation with the Population and Public Health Division, Ministry of Health)

Moderated by Sabrina Lloyd-Ellis, Master's Student, UBC WACH

Panel Location: Multipurpose Room

12:30 Diagnostics and Therapeutics Presentations: Part 2

Moderated by Hannah Okada Akhlaghi, Undergraduate Student, UBC Integrated Sciences

Signe MacLennan, Doctoral Student, UBC MedGen

HPV integration may alter the epigenetic landscape and immunogenicity of extrachromosomal DNAs in cervical cancer

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Dollina Dodani, Doctoral Student, UBC Bioinformatics

Multi-Cohort Ensemble Learning Framework for Vaginal Microbiome-Based Endometrial Cancer Detection

Ali Khajegili Mirabadi, Doctoral Student, UBC SBME

Toward a General-Purpose Search Engine in Pan-Cancer Computational Pathology

1:05

Prevention and Screening Presentations

Moderated by Nimmy Sebastian, Research Assistant, UBC OVCARE

Alex Lukey, Doctoral Student, UBC SPPH

Complication rate of bilateral salpingectomy by indication in British Columbia

Seerit Boparai, Undergraduate Student, UBC OBGYN

Global Adoption of Opportunistic Salpingectomy for Ovarian Cancer Prevention: A Review of FIGO Member Society Guidelines

Md Saiful Alam, Doctoral Student, UBC SPPH

Long-term risk of developing cervical pre-cancers among women ≥ 50 years: a comparative study of negative primary HPV versus normal cytology screen results.

Alice J. Mei, Undergraduate Student, UBC OBGYN

Temporal trends in contraceptive use in British Columbia, Canada between 2001 and 2021: a descriptive analysis

Sabrina Lloyd-Ellis, Master's Student, UBC WACH

Temporal trends in BRCA1 and BRCA2 testing over time in patients with ovarian cancer in British Columbia

Navindi De Silva, Medical Student, UBC Medicine

Risk Evaluation and Screening to Tailor Prevention and Reduce the Incidence of Endometrial Cancer: A Review of Three Endometrial Cancer Risk Models

2:10

Coffee Break

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2:25 Engaging in KT as a Trainee Session

Nicole Prestley (WHRI Manager of Research + Knowledge Translation), Dr. Alicia Tone (Director of Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada) and Julianne Mcleod (GCI Knowledge Mobilization and Project Coordinator)

3:20 Awards and Closing

Dr. Gillian Hanley, Associate Professor at UBC and Chair of the GCI Trainee Research Day Committee

3:40 Poster Session & Networking Reception

Snacks and Drinks Provided

Location: Atrium outside VGH Paetzold Health Education Centre

Prevention and Screening

Jennifer Ellis-White, Research Assistant, UBC OVCARE

Non-Invasive Strategies for Early Detection of Uterine Cancer in Patients with Abnormal Uterine Bleeding

Arabella Helgason, Master's Student, UBC WACH

The role of minimally invasive screening for endometrial cancer surveillance in patients with Lynch syndrome

Pamela Bai & Prabhleen Sandhu, Medical Students, UBC Medicine

Evaluating public knowledge of HPV self-screening tests and reasons for patient preferences of provider- versus self-collected cervical cancer/HPV screening tests

Nimmy Sebastian, Research Assistant, UBC OVCARE

Feasibility and Acceptability of Endometrial Cancer Screening and Risk-Reduction Interventions in High-Risk Populations

Tessa Woodside, Master's Student, UBC WACH

Balancing Cancer Risk with Progestogen Therapy: A Research Proposal

Diagnostics and Therapeutics

Emily Zhang, Undergraduate Student, UBC

Investigating STING Pathway in Low Grade Serous Ovarian Cancer

Longyijie Wei, Master's Student, UBC Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Dual targeting of cystathionine gamma-lyase and mTOR pathway in clear cell ovarian cancer

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

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Farbod Moghaddam, Master's Student, UBC Bioinformatics

Integrated multi-omics approach for the characterization of molecular outliers in
endometrial carcinomaUterine Bleeding

Maedeh Mirzazadeh, Master's Student, UBC Bioinformatics

AI-Powered Pathology Image Analysis for Classifying Aggressive and Non-Aggressive
Endometrial Cancer Subtypes

Sofia Serrano, Undergraduate Student, UBC Biochem

Developing models to study HER2 intratumoural heterogeneity in p53abn endometrial
cancers

Paak Long Goldman Lam, Master's Student, UBC IOP

Identifying tumor heterogeneity and phenotypic plasticity in response to drugs in high-
grade serous ovarian cancer at the single-cell level

Zahra Mohammadi, Doctoral Student, UBC WACH

Unraveling the Cellular and Molecular Characteristics of Mesonephric-Like
Adenocarcinoma: A Multi-Omics Approach

Survivorship & Quality of Life

Olivia Gagnon, Medical Student, UBC Medicine

Digital Storytelling as a Therapeutic and Resiliency Tool: Insights from Endometriosis
Management and Applications in Cancer Research

SPEAKERS

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OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Teresa Tsang

MD, FRCPC, FACC, FASE

Dr. Teresa Tsang is an Echo-Cardiologist, Clinician Scientist, and Professor in the Division of Cardiology at UBC. She is the Director of the Echo Lab at Vancouver General Hospital and UBC Hospital, Director of the UBC AI Echo Core Lab, as well as Executive Director and Associate Dean, Research of Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute.

Her focused areas of clinical and research interests include artificial intelligence in echocardiography, atrial remodelling, atrial fibrillation and other age-related cardiac conditions, and advancing technologies to achieve health equity.

SPEAKERS

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KEYNOTE TALK

Dr. Melanie Altas

MD, FRCSC



Dr. Melanie Altas is a Gynaecologist and a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She completed her medical degree at the University of Toronto and her residency in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at UBC in 2007. Dr. Altas also serves as the Director of the BC Centre for Vulvar Health at Vancouver General Hospital and is a Sexual Medicine Consultant at the BC Cancer Agency.

Dr. Altas has dedicated her clinical practice to vulvovaginal conditions, menopause, sexual pain disorders and cancer survivorship. She focuses her research on knowledge translation, community access to care, developing clinical tools, and the impact of chronic vulvar conditions and vulvodynia on patient quality of life. Dr. Altas advocates for patient-centred care and involving patient partners in research. She is a Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Vulvovaginal Disease.

Career Panel



Dr. Jonathan Simkin

Director of BC Cancer Registry, Provincial Health Services Authority

Dr. Jonathan Simkin serves as Director of the BC Cancer Registry, an operational leadership role within the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), and is the Outgoing Chair of the Canadian Council of Cancer Registries. Holding PhD and MPH degrees from the University of British Columbia, his expertise spans geospatial methods, population oncology research, and applying deep learning to cancer analytics. Dr. Simkin brings over ten years of experience in cancer registry and surveillance, including roles with the Yukon Government and having previously served as the Scientific Director of the BC Cancer Registry at BC Cancer. In his current capacity, he is spearheading the implementation of cutting-edge technologies to enhance registry efficiency, timeliness, and data quality, strengthening support for cancer care, surveillance, and research across British Columbia.



Saeideh Maleki

Medical Science Liaison, Bayer

Saeideh is a Medical Science Liaison at Bayer, focusing on women's health with a background in oncology. With a PharmD and two master's degrees earned across three countries — her home country, Iran, the UK, and Canada — her educational journey reflects both ambition and adaptability.

Currently, she's involved in supporting the launch of a women's health product, collaborating with gynecologists and oncologists to deliver medical education and provide clinical insights. Her role requires balancing scientific accuracy with clear communication, whether she's reviewing clinical data, preparing for advisory board meetings, or addressing medical inquiries from healthcare providers.

Career Panel (cont'd)



Dr. Kyla Hingwing

Research and Innovation Manager, Genome BC

Kyla Hingwing graduated with a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Simon Fraser University in 2013. After spending almost a decade as a Scientist working for a small start-up biotech company, she moved to her current position as a Research and Innovation Manager at Genome BC. At Genome BC she helps develop, fund and manage research projects with the aim of implementing new innovations into the Healthcare system.



Dr. Sarah Fielden

Director, Monitoring and Evaluation with the Population and Public Health Division, Ministry of Health

Dr. Sarah Fielden (RD, PhD) is an established evaluator, leader, and researcher, with over 20 years working in the BC healthcare system. She joined the Ministry of Health's Population and Public Health Division in February of 2024 as the Director of Monitoring and Evaluation. Previous to that, she worked as the Lead of Monitoring and Evaluation for Fraser Health's Public Health Department for over 5 years and worked as a senior evaluation associate in primary care. She was a CIHR scholar and obtained a PhD in Population Health Promotion from UBC and completed a post-doc fellowship in with the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) in 2014. She is a Registered Dietitian and evaluation specialist with an emphasis on improving health service delivery using a Health Equity lens both within Canada and Overseas.

Engaging in Knowledge Mobilization as a Trainee



Nicole Prestley

WHRI Manager of Research + Knowledge Translation

Nicole Prestley is the Manager of Research and Knowledge Translation at the Women's Health Research Institute in Vancouver, BC. Since 2006, she has facilitated health care research and served as a patient partner liaison, focusing on integrating patient voices into the research process. Nicole is committed to enhancing the accessibility and application of evidence-based information for patients, communities, and other knowledge users. She has received formal training in knowledge translation from programs led by Dr. Sharon Straus at St. Michael's Hospital and Dr. Melanie Barwick at the University of Toronto/SickKids Hospital.



Dr. Alicia Tone

Director of Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada

Alicia Tone (PhD) is the Director of Research at Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC), where she leads national efforts to advance ovarian cancer research and improve outcomes for those affected. She holds a PhD in ovarian cancer biology from the University of Toronto and completed postdoctoral training in genomics at BC Cancer. Since joining OCC in 2019, Alicia has directed the OvCAN initiative, focusing on developing preclinical models, testing innovative treatments, and enabling early-phase clinical trials. Her work emphasizes the integration of patient perspectives to ensure research is impactful, inclusive, and aligned with community needs.

Engaging in Knowledge Mobilization as a Trainee (cont'd)



Julianne McLeod

Knowledge Mobilization and Project Coordinator, Gynecologic Cancer Initiative

Julianne McLeod (MSc) is the Knowledge Mobilization and Project Coordinator at the Gynecologic Cancer Initiative, where she supports integrated knowledge mobilization and patient engagement across the GCI's team of principal investigators. Passionate about bridging the gap between research and clinical practice to improve outcomes in gynecologic oncology, she facilitates collaboration with knowledge users to ensure project outcomes are meaningful, responsive to priority needs, and mobilized in ways that maximize uptake and impact.
