

Stony Brook Women's Health Research Conference

Overview/Abstract

Women's health research is an interdisciplinary field dedicated to understanding health issues unique to women, as well as how various conditions affect women differently than men. This area which has historically been understudied, is based on sex-related biological mechanisms and gender related societal mechanisms, encompasses studies on reproductive health, maternal health, gynecological disorders, mental health, and the impact of sex/gender on disease and treatment outcomes. The goal of this research field is to enhance healthcare quality and outcomes for women across the lifespan and across diverse populations.

At Stony Brook, academicians and clinicians from the East and West campuses conduct award-winning research on women's health. Examples of such ongoing research include studies on diseases and conditions that only affect women (e.g., pregnancy, ovarian cancer, polycystic ovarian syndrome), that disproportionately affect women (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, autoimmune disorders, depression), and that affect women and men differently (e.g., heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease). Yet, Stony Brook researchers and research teams often work in silos. Our interdisciplinary team proposes to conduct a conference in March 2026 that will showcase women's health research conducted at Stony Brook, make connections between individuals and teams, and start a discussion to explore the possibility of establishing a Women's Health Research Center.

Due to the broad nature of the research focus and discussion about a future Research Center, university stakeholders will include various clinical departments (e.g., Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Medicine, Psychiatry, Medicine, Family and Preventative Medicine), Health Sciences schools and programs (e.g., Renaissance School of Medicine, Program in Public Health, Social Welfare), West Campus departments from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and College of Arts and Sciences, as well as overarching offices such as the Office of Vice President of Research, Office of Scientific Affairs, and Advancement Department.

The proposed conference will attract a diverse target audience of approximately 60-90 Stony Brook attendees and additional 30-50 external attendees, depending on marketing efforts. These include: Academic and clinician women's health researchers: social, basic, and computational scientists, and clinician researchers from behavioral health, obstetrics and gynecology, Cancer Center, family medicine, and internal medicine; Healthcare professionals: Physicians, nurses, and allied health workers specializing in care for women; Students and trainees: Medical students, residents, and fellows interested in women's health research; Community advocates: Individuals and organizations dedicated to improving women's health including philanthropists who have previously made endowments and gifts to women's health and women's health research; and University leadership: Dedicated to promoting research and securing funding.

Potential keynote speakers will be, 1) Dr. Leslee Shaw, Director the Blavatnik Family Women's Health Research Institute who will speak about cardiovascular disease in women and conducting interdisciplinary research at a women's health research center. 2) Dr. Irene O. Aninye, Chief Scientific Officer of the Society of Women's Health Research, who will speak about the past, present and future of women's health research. They will both take part in an afternoon moderated panel.