

# CRepHS NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 1, FISCAL YEAR 2026

## ► MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This newsletter issue highlights several exciting advancements in reproductive health research, including innovative approaches to improve obstetric outcomes, help infertile patients, and develop non-hormonal male contraception. You'll see in these pages that we are proud to highlight our personnel and collaborators whose dedication continues to drive meaningful change in the field.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and I wish each of you a safe and peaceful holiday season.

**Sarah K. England, PhD**

Alan A. and Edith L. Wolff Professor of Medicine  
Vice Chair of Research and Professor,  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

*The CRepHS Newsletter is published quarterly. Look at the last page to see how to submit your news!*



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Personnel Update
- Personnel Spotlight
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## PERSONNEL UPDATE

### ► NEW TEAM MEMBERS (as of date of publication, 11/25/25)

**Yasuko Arimura, MS**, Visiting Researcher, Amargant i Riera lab

**Ritu Dave**, MD-PhD Student, Frolova lab

**Sharvari Deshpande, PhD**, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Amargant i Riera lab

**Maia Elizagaray, PhD**, Staff Scientist, Khabele lab

**Mostafa Eyada, MD**, Clinical Fellow Associate, Mullen lab



Arimura



Dave



Deshpande



Elizagaray



Eyada



### ► PROMOTIONS

**Erin Reinl, PhD**, promoted to Assistant Professor, beginning July 1st.



Reinl



## PERSONNEL SPOTLIGHT

### ► CANDICE WOOLFOLK, PHD

We are thrilled to put the spotlight on Dr. Candice Woolfolk! Her WashU journey spans nearly a decade, beginning in 2015 as a Senior Data Analyst and later as a Research Statistician in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. After a brief departure in 2020, she returned in 2021 to join the OBGYN faculty as an Assistant Professor and recently received a secondary appointment in the School of Public Health.

Dr. Woolfolk's interest in perinatal research was inspired by the premature birth of her niece at 23 weeks' gestation, an experience that revealed the complexities of neonatal care and the importance of advancing knowledge in maternal and infant health. "For my sister, the pregnancy had been healthy until suddenly it wasn't, and no one could fully explain why," states Dr. Woolfolk. "My niece is 13 now, and she's healthy, smart, and beautiful, but I realized back then that I wanted to contribute to developing evidence that could guide better prevention, management, and support for families."

As a mixed methods researcher specializing in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Dr. Woolfolk's research examines how clinical care models—particularly group prenatal care—can enhance patient engagement, equity, and long-term maternal health outcomes. She also utilizes large clinical and population-based datasets to identify factors influencing pregnancy outcomes and labor progression, develop predictive models for obstetric outcomes, and support evidence-based care.

Dr. Woolfolk's service and leadership contributions extend beyond her research. Her additional roles include: Associate Editor of Statistics for Obstetrics & Gynecology (The Green Journal); Faculty Lead for the OB/GYN Community Advisory Board; WUSM Equity Champion; and Member of the WUSM IRB/HRPO Advisory Committee. Through these roles, she promotes methodological rigor, community engagement, and equity in women's health research.

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Dr. Candice Woolfolk  
Assistant Professor



## PERSONNEL SPOTLIGHT

### ► CANDICE WOOLFOLK, PHD

*...continued*

Outside of her professional roles, Dr. Woolfolk enjoys spending time at home, relaxing with sitcoms such as "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" and "The Office." She also volunteers in her church's children's ministry, where she teaches elementary-aged students.

Over the next several years of her career, Dr. Woolfolk aims to advance research that informs data-driven approaches to labor management, explore novel statistical methodologies for risk prediction and targeted interventions, and expand her involvement in teaching and mentorship.

**Did You Know?** A St. Louis native and graduate of University City High School, Dr. Woolfolk earned her BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Missouri-Columbia and both her MPH and PhD in Epidemiology from Saint Louis University. ■



Dr. Woolfolk with her niece.

### ► FYI - ReProBank

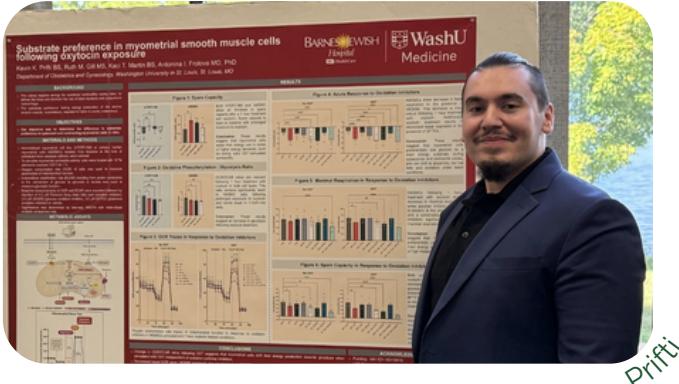
The Department of OBGYN's Reproductive Specimen Processing and Banking (ReProBank) site has been updated! Learn about the ReProBank's specimen collection services for academic, government and independent researchers by going to <https://reprobank.wustl.edu/>.





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ **Nardhy Gomez-Lopez, PhD**, was named Associate Director of CRepHS. She was also elected to the Publications Committee of the [American Association of Immunologists](#). Her committee term began in July.
- ▶ **Dr. Sara Pietroforte**, postdoctoral research associate in the Amargant i Riera lab, was selected as a Distinguished Postdoctoral Scholar by [WashU Medicine's Center of Regenerative Medicine \(CRM\)](#). This honor highlights her exceptional contributions to regenerative science and her commitment to advancing the field. Learn more about the CRM and its affiliates [here](#).
- ▶ **Viju Gupta, PhD**, senior scientist in the Khabele lab, will serve as one of the discussion leads for the Leadership course "Leading in Uncertainty (LiU)." Find more details about the course [here](#). Not too long ago, Dr. Gupta also completed the inaugural 9-month WashU Emerging Leaders Program. "It feels exciting to now be involved on the other side of the table," says Dr. Gupta. "In this role, I will be facilitating a one-hour discussion with a small cohort after each of their classes."
- ▶ In September, **Kevin Prifti**, DBBS pre-doctoral student in the Frolova lab, presented a poster and a talk at the annual joint [Cell Biology & Physiology | Molecular Cell Biology](#) Retreat and received a poster award.



Gomez-Lopez





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ **Dr. Magdaleena Mbadhi**, postdoctoral research associate in the Frolova lab was elected President of WashU Black Postdoctoral Association. [Learn more here.](#)
- ▶ Congratulations to **Shweta Bhagwat, PhD**, postdoctoral research associate in the Santi lab, for earning the "CRepHS Best Paper Award" for the period of April-September 2025. Read her paper titled "Bacterial Vaginosis Toxins Impair Sperm Capacitation and Fertilization" [by clicking here](#). Additionally, Dr. Bhagwat's research was also chosen for an oral presentation at the ["Fertilization and Activation of Development" Gordon Research Conference \(GRC\)](#) in July.
- ▶ Postdoctoral Research Associate **Sara Pietroforte, PhD**, with the Amargant i Riera lab, was selected for an oral presentation at the "Fertilization and Activation of Development" Gordon Research Seminar (GRS). The title of her talk was "Biomechanical Profiling Suggests Structural and Functional Differences Between the Left and Right Ovaries of Mice Across Different Age Groups." Additionally, Dr. Pietroforte was elected as the next chair (2027) of the Fertilization and Activation of Development GRS. The GRS inclusively welcomes PhD students, postdocs and early career researchers from various backgrounds and life stages. [Learn more about GRS here.](#)
- ▶ In Q1 of this fiscal year, **Dr. Sarah K. England** presented the following: "Chronodisruption – A Potential Risk for Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes" at Grand Rounds for the [Mayo Clinic Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology](#) in Rochester, MN; "Revisiting the role of Na<sup>+</sup> channels in regulating uterine activity" in Massachusetts for a Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology ([FASEB](#)) Science Research Conference session; and "Chronodisruption – A Potential Risk for Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes" for a [NICHD](#) Science Friday talk (virtual).





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ In July, **Dr. Nardhy Gomez-Lopez** gave a virtual presentation at the [Society for the Study of Reproduction \(SSR\) 2025 Annual Meeting](#). The title of her talk was "Immune Mechanisms That Initiate Labor Too Soon and Harm the Offspring."

- ▶ **Summer Program Acceptances for Amargant i Riera Lab**  
**Undergraduate Researchers:** **Andy Liu** was accepted into the [Summer Undergraduate Research Guided Experience \(SURGE\)](#) program. SURGE, administered by the WashU Office of Undergraduate Research, provides stipends and flexible programming for WashU undergraduates pursuing faculty-mentored, project-based inquiry across all academic disciplines. **Karen Canseco** was accepted into the [WashU Women's Health Engineering Summer Research Program](#). Students in this program are immersed in rigorous research skills training, and provided with the support, training and experiences students need to improve oral and written communication and prepare for graduate studies and careers in women's health engineering.



Liu



Canseco

- ▶ **IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!** Congratulations to [Christine O'Brien, PhD](#), Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering, for receiving a highly competitive [NIH R01 grant](#) from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). The award will fund her lab's research project titled "Equitable and accessible wearable device for continuous calculation of blood loss for postpartum hemorrhage."



O'Brien





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION



England



Frolova



Garr Barry



Khabele



Martin



Wang

- ▶ Congratulations to the labs of **Sarah K. England, PhD**, and **Toni Frolova, MD, PhD**, for receiving an [NIH R56 grant](#) in September. Drs. England and Frolova are multi-Principal Investigators on this project along with [Dr. Princess Imoukhuede](#) from the University of Washington. Their project is titled "Quantitative and computational characterization of oxytocin receptor function" and is administered by [NICHD](#). This grant will determine the kinetics of oxytocin receptor (OXTR) surface receptor localization and activation in cells and determine how the receptor desensitizes and degrades in cells. Their ultimate goal with this project is to create a computational model that can be used to improve clinical oxytocin use and obstetric outcomes.
- ▶ **Valene Garr Barry, PhD**, was awarded an [NIH K01 grant](#) from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities in September. The grant is for her project titled "A Precision Medicine Approach to Fetal Growth Restriction Among Black Women."
- ▶ Multi-Principal Investigators, **Dineo Khabele, MD**, and **Sarah K. England, PhD**, are recipients of an [NIH K12 Women's Reproductive Health Research \(WRHR\) grant](#). Their project is titled "WashU-WRHR; Gateway to Improving Women's Reproductive Health." Nandini Raghuraman, MD, MSCI, is the Research Director of the WashU-WRHR. Visit the [WashU-WRHR website](#) to learn more.
- ▶ **Kaci Martin**, DBBS pre-doctoral student in the [Frolova lab](#), was awarded an [NIH F31 grant](#) titled "Functional Effects of Oxytocin Receptor Post-translational Modifications," with a September 1st start date. Kaci's project may, in the long term, lead to development of new strategies to decrease the rates of labor complications and maternal morbidity.
- ▶ In August, an [NIH R01 grant](#) was received by multi-PIs **Yong Wang, PhD**, Chuan Wang, PhD, and Shantanu Chakrabartty, PhD. The grant is administered by the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering. Their project is titled "SCH: Wearable Bi-modal Imaging System with Multi-scale AI for Uterine Contraction Mapping in Obstetric Care." [Read more about their research and award here](#).



## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

### ► Dr. Ferreira Awarded Male Contraceptive Initiative Fellowship

**Juan Ferreira, PhD**, a postdoctoral research associate in the laboratory of [Celia Santi, MD, PhD](#), has been awarded a Male Contraceptive Initiative (MCI) Fellowship Grant for his project, "High-Throughput Assay to Screen for Candidate Contraceptives Targeting Sperm Function." Dr. Ferreira began his two-year MCI Fellowship in September 2025.

The research conducted through Dr. Ferreira's MCI-funded project builds on his previous [Lalor Foundation](#) fellowships and his work developing a novel assay to evaluate sperm fertilization capacity in infertile patients. This assay, called WHICH-A.R.T., is a patented, native-cell platform that leverages key physiological changes in sperm that occur during maturation before the cells can fertilize the oocyte (e.g., membrane potential and intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ). WHICH-A.R.T. is designed to help fertility specialists triage between conventional in vitro fertilization (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) by detecting sperm fertilization capacity at the molecular level.



Ferreira

Now, with support from the MCI fellowship, Dr. Ferreira will translate the molecular mechanisms underpinning WHICH-A.R.T.—including sperm membrane-potential hyperpolarization and intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dynamics—into high-throughput screening assays to identify non-hormonal male contraceptive candidates that disrupt sperm function and fertilization. Dr. Ferreira's reproductive sciences research aims to help infertile patients by reducing unnecessary procedures and the economic, emotional, and time-consuming burdens associated with repetitive unsuccessful treatments.

"Through the MCI award, I look forward to further optimizing our assay and expanding not only my research and scientific findings, but also providing the field with a much-needed, reliable high-throughput screening platform to identify candidate drugs for non-hormonal male contraception," states Dr. Ferreira. "It's also an incredible opportunity to strengthen the foundation of my career as I work toward becoming an independent investigator."

Learn more about MCI at [www.malecontraceptive.org/mci-fellows.html](http://www.malecontraceptive.org/mci-fellows.html).





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

### ► Welcoming the M.S.R.S. Inaugural Cohort

This fall, the Center for Reproductive Health Sciences (CRepHS) warmly welcomed the inaugural cohort for the [Master of Science in Reproductive Sciences](#) (MSRS) program. Coming from opposite coasts, two students were admitted—Amelia Giecek from Virginia and Mahima Marichetty from California—and both hold Bachelor of Science degrees from biology programs.

Amelia and Mahima began to map out new connections in the [Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology](#) over the summer through a pre-orientation

Zoom chat about St. Louis and WashU with CRepHS trainees Dustyn Levenson, Andy Liu and Dr. Magdaleena Mbadhi. Additionally, Amelia and Mahima met up on-campus in August with students from 17 other WashU Medicine graduate programs for a joint orientation session.

Erin Reinl, PhD, Assistant Professor of OBGYN and director of the new master's program, states, "Launching this master's program expands the impact of CRepHS' collaborative research and learning environment. Similarly, I'm excited to see how the energy and creativity from our new students will, in turn, enrich the broader field of reproductive health research."

Amelia and Mahima began their core and "Research" concentration [coursework](#), taught by leading WashU Medicine scientists and clinicians in the field, on August 25th. After completing three rotations each through labs of [principal investigators](#) with reproductive and/or women's health-related research projects, Amelia joined the lab of [Toni Frolova, MD, PhD](#), for her thesis research, and Mahima joined the lab of [Farners Amargant i Riera, PhD](#).

"I am excited to join the Frolova lab, contribute to its work on uterine contractility, and learn from accomplished researchers during my graduate studies," says Amelia.

Next fall, MSRS students will be able to start their studies with either a "Clinical Embryology" or "Research" concentration. Applications for fall '26 admission are currently being accepted. Visit <http://msrs.washu.edu/> for additional information.



MSRS students Mahima Marichetty (left) & Amelia Giecek (right) with Dr. Erin Reinl.



## PUBLICATIONS

### ► Q1 PUBLICATIONS (CRepHS lab members in **bold**)

Bell A, Foeller M, **Woolfolk C**, Diveley E, Zhang F, Scheffer A, Huang R, Jackson D, Raghuraman N, Carter E, Mysorekar IU, Kelly JC. [Association of Area Deprivation Index with perinatal and COVID-19 outcomes during the early pandemic: a secondary analysis of a prospective cohort study](#). J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med. 2025 Dec;38(1):2548416. doi: 10.1080/14767058.2025.2548416. Epub 2025 Aug 25. PMID: 40854807; PMCID: PMC12593223.

**Pietroforte S, Amargant F.** [Biophysical, cellular, and mouse model approaches to investigate the mechanical regulation of folliculogenesis](#). Semin Cell Dev Biol. 2025 Oct;174:103649. doi: 10.1016/j.semcd.2025.103649. Epub 2025 Aug 30. PMID: 40886429.

Staples H, Paul R, Zhang F, Huysman B, Goodman B, Rimsza R, Bradley B, Atwood L, Kelly JC, Carter EB, Odibo A, **Frolova A**, Raghuraman N. [Visual aids for induction of labor education: a randomized controlled trial](#). Am J Obstet Gynecol MFM. 2025 Oct;7(10):101743. doi: 10.1016/j.ajogmf.2025.101743. Epub 2025 Jul 18. PMID: 40684988.

**McCarthy RT, Reinl EL, Strutz PK, Zhao P, Esparza A, Sass ER, Schoening M, Kaginele P, Shi N, Canal M, Chubiz JE, Fay JC, Jungheim ES, Raghuraman N, Kent LN, Cox RC, Frolova AI, Herzog ED, England SK.** [Social disadvantage is associated with impaired increase in salivary diurnal melatonin amplitude throughout pregnancy](#). Sleep Adv. 2025 Sep 30;6(4):zpafo64. doi: 10.1093/sleepadvances/zpafo64. PMID: 41116867; PMCID: PMC12535763.

**Ota Y, Gupta V, Fashemi BE, Akande M, Babu P, Thuthika P, Elizagaray ML, Sun L, Sanders B, Kuroki LM, McCourt CK, Hagemann AR, Hagemann IS, Thaker PH, Mutch DG, Powell MA, Hyrc K, Verma P, Krais J, Bitler BG, Mullen M, Khabele D.** [Targeting RAD52 overcomes PARP inhibitor resistance in preclinical Brca2-deficient ovarian cancer model](#). bioRxiv [Preprint]. 2025 Sep 26:2025.09.24.678351. doi: 10.1101/2025.09.24.678351. PMID: 41040355; PMCID: PMC12485677.

Valentine MC, **Mullen MM, Kotnik EN, Powell MA, Thaker PH, McCourt CK, Kuroki LM, Hagemann AR, Arend RC, Holehouse AS, Mitra R, Mutch DG, Fuh KC.** [Multiomic Characterization of Pre- and Post-Neoadjuvant Chemotherapy-Treated Ovarian Cancer Reveals Mediators of Tumorigenesis and Chemotherapy Response](#). Cancer Res. 2025 Sep 15;85(18):3558-3570. doi: 10.1158/0008-5472.CAN-24-3804. PMID: 40693832; PMCID: PMC12377306.

Temple KJ, Li P, McKinnie HG, Thompson Gray A, Bertron JL, Ringuette AE, de Andrade Horn P, Lyon MD, **Bhagwat S, Asadi L, Li S, Lazarenko RM, McCarthy R, Chang S, Turkett JA, Kramlinger V, Watson KJ, Zagol-Ikapitte IA, Denton JS, Santi CM, Jones CK, Lindsley CW, Boutaud O.** [Highly Potent and Subtype-Selective Sperm-Specific Potassium Channel SLO3 Inhibitors Display High Tissue Exposure in the Murine Female Reproductive Tract](#). ACS Pharmacol Transl Sci. 2025 Aug 15;8(9):3281-3295. doi: 10.1021/acsptsci.5c00416. PMID: 40969884; PMCID: PMC12441834.

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## PUBLICATIONS

### ► Q1 PUBLICATIONS (CRepHS lab members in **bold**)

Lesage J, DiMauro A, Schab AM, Stidham S, **Mullen MM**, Fuh KC, Longmore GD. [DDR2 confers ferroptosis resistance to cancer-associated fibroblasts and attenuates PARPi sensitivity of ovarian tumor cells](#). Mol Cancer Res. 2025 Sep 4. doi: 10.1158/1541-7786.MCR-25-0268. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40906573.

Williams SM, Rosenblatt KP, Reznik S, Misra DP, Siricilla S, **Gomez-Lopez N**, Taylor BD, Adams Waldorf KM, Menon R; PREBIC North America 2024. [Defining knowledge gaps in preterm birth research: Can biomarkers fill the gaps?](#) Front Med (Lausanne). 2025 Sep 2;12:1655833. doi: 10.3389/fmed.2025.1655833. PMID: 40963572; PMCID: PMC12439477.

**Mullen MM**, Arend RC. [From one-size-fits all to biology-driven care: Emerging paradigms in gynecologic oncology](#). Gynecol Oncol. 2025 Sep;200:A1-A2. doi: 10.1016/j.ygyno.2025.08.032. PMID: 40947176.

Whitley J, Burd J, Doering M, Zofkie A, **Frolova A**, Kelly J, Raghuraman N. [Postpartum diuretic administration and hospital readmission: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#). Am J Obstet Gynecol MFM. 2025 Sep;7(9):101738. doi: 10.1016/j.ajogmf.2025.101738. Epub 2025 Jul 2. PMID: 40614863.

Kelly JC, Raghuraman N, **Woolfolk C**, **Frolova AI**. [Comparison of 2 aspirin doses for the prophylaxis of preeclampsia in twin pregnancy](#). Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2025 Aug 23:S0002-9378(25)00577-0. doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2025.08.020. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40854525.



Bhatti G, Sufriyana H, Romero R, Patel T, Tekola-Ayele F, Alsaggaf I, **Gomez- Lopez N**, Su ECY, Done B, Hoffmann S, van Bömmel A, Wan C, Albrecht J, Novak C; DREAM Placenta Clock Challenge Consortium; Chaiworapongsa T, Sirota M, Aghaeepour N, Stolovitzky G, Bryant DR, Tarca AL. [Placental epigenetic clocks derived from crowdsourcing: Implications for the study of accelerated aging in obstetrics](#). iScience. 2025 Jul 23;28(8):113181. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2025.113181. PMID: 40822353; PMCID: PMC12356336.

Wolf HM, Webb BT, Strauss JF 3rd, Tarca AL, Romero R, Hassan SS, Latendresse SJ, Chaiworapongsa T, Berry S, **Gomez-Lopez N**, Chaemsaiithong P, York TP. [The genetic architecture of cervical length is shared with spontaneous preterm birth risk](#). Commun Med (Lond). 2025 Aug 14;5(1):352. doi: 10.1038/s43856-025-01078-0. PMID: 40813921; PMCID: PMC12354721.

Furuya RL, Boak K, **Mullen MM**, Wang D, Massad LS. [Real-world outcomes after pembrolizumab treatment for cervical cancer: Results from a university setting](#). Gynecol Oncol Rep. 2025 Aug 6;60:101921. doi: 10.1016/j.gore.2025.101921. PMID: 40831666; PMCID: PMC12359185.

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## PUBLICATIONS

### ► Q1 PUBLICATIONS (CRepHS lab members in **bold**)

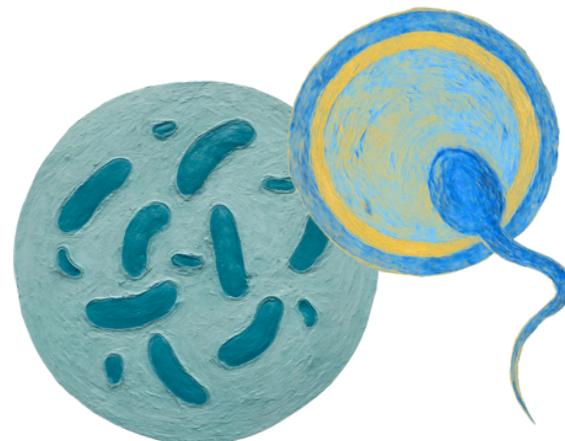
Shea AE, **Woolfolk CL**, Cahill AG, Tuuli MG, Tita AT, Srinivas SK, Caughey AB, Macones GA, Subramaniam A. [Association of postpartum oxytocin dose and postpartum bleeding outcomes in nulliparous patients at term](#). Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2025 Aug;233(2):118.e1-118.e11. doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2025.01.032. Epub 2025 Jan 30. PMID: 39892837.

Miceska S, Grašić Kuhar C, Frković Grazio S, Škof E, Krishnamoorthy P, **Khabele D**, Kloboves Prevodnik V. [Association of Tumor-Infiltrating Lymphocytes and Inflammation Status with Survival Outcome in Patients with High-Grade Serous Ovarian Carcinoma](#). Cancers (Basel). 2025 Jul 8;17(14):2269. doi: 10.3390/cancers17142269. PMID: 40723153; PMCID: PMC12293900.

McElrath TF, Jeyabalan A, Khodursky A, Moe AB, Lee M, Jain M, Goetzl L, Sutton EF, Simmons PM, Saade GR, Saad A, Pacheco LD, Park-Hwang E, **Frolova AI**, Carter EB, Collier AY, Kiefer DG, Berghella V, Boelig RC, Elovitz MA, Gyamfi-Bannerman C, Biggio JR, Rood K, Grobman WA, Haverty C, Rasmussen M. [Utility of the US Preventive Services Task Force for Preeclampsia Risk Assessment and Aspirin Prophylaxis](#). 2025 Jul 1;8(7):e2521792. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.21792. Erratum in: JAMA Netw Open. 2025 Aug 1;8(8):e2530317. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.30317. PMID: 40674048; PMCID: PMC12272286.

Congratulations to [Dr. Shweta Bhagwat](#) from the [Santi Lab](#) on her first-author publication, "Bacterial vaginosis toxins impair sperm capacitation and fertilization," in *Human Reproduction*. This study uncovers a new way bacterial vaginosis (BV) may contribute to infertility. BV-related toxins (LPS and VLY) were found to disrupt crucial steps sperm need to fertilize an egg, including movement, energy use, and the ability to penetrate the egg. By causing harmful calcium overload in sperm, these toxins may lower fertilization chances in patients with BV.

- **Bhagwat S, Asadi L, McCarthy R, Ferreira J, Li P, Li E, Spivak S, Gaydon A, Reddy V, Armstrong C, Morrill SR, Zhou H, Lewis AL, Lewis WG, Santi CM.** [Bacterial vaginosis toxins impair sperm capacitation and fertilization](#). *Hum Reprod*. 2025 Sep 1;40(9):1720-1734. doi: 10.1093/humrep/deaf132. PMID: 40652342; PMCID: PMC12370371.





## EVENTS & COLLABORATIONS

### ► CRepHS Summer Picnic

The extreme heat didn't stop CRepHS from having a summer picnic event on July 27<sup>th</sup> in Tower Grove Park. Around 50 CRepHS personnel, family and friends came together to enjoy food and refreshments, games and great conversation.



### ► CRepHS "Around the World" Collaboration

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, CRepHS hosted a vibrant "Around the World" themed collaboration event on the Medical Campus. The potluck celebration highlighted the rich diversity of CRepHS team members, with attendees sharing a variety of cultural dishes, ranging from entrees to snacks and desserts. As attendees enthusiastically sampled the delicious offerings, many shared personal stories behind their recipes. In total, the event showcased that CRepHS team members hail from more than two dozen countries, reflecting the global reach of our department.





## EVENTS & COLLABORATIONS

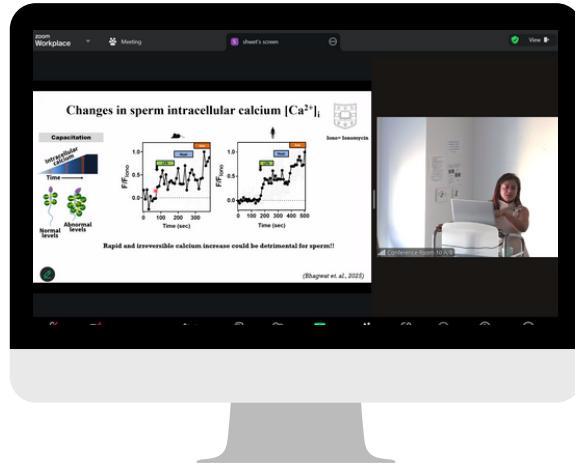
### ► UPCOMING EVENTS & COLLABORATIONS

#### CRepHS Seminar Series

Here are the dates of the **CRepHS Seminars** taking place over the next few months:

- December 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>
- January 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>
- February 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>

All occur on Fridays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. [View additional details here.](#)



#### CRepHS Collaboration Event

A fun way to collab with us is coming up! A CRepHS "Holiday Party" is taking place on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> from 12-2 p.m. [Email Nami Rutherford](#) if you missed seeing the calendar invite.

#### Writing Accountability Group

The Writing Accountability Group (WAG) is open to 10th floor BCIH members. Meetings take place Tuesdays, 3:30–5:00 p.m. (10 A/B conference room) to provide protected writing time. Policies include no talking during quiet time and attend at least 60-minutes.





## ► CRepHS Events

Events for CRepHS and Ob/Gyn can be found online at <https://obgyn.wustl.edu/calendar>.

The CRepHS Seminar Series takes place most Fridays at 9:00 a.m. and is open to all. Attend in-person (BJCIH 10<sup>th</sup> floor) or [click here to request a Zoom link](#).



## ► Submit CRepHS News

We want to hear about your scientific accomplishments! [Submit your CRepHS-related news at anytime by using this form](#).

## ► About CRepHS

The [Center for Reproductive Health Sciences \(CRepHS\)](#) aims to improve the overall health of women and men by making reproductive health a priority in investigative and translational science. As the basic science division of WashU Medicine's [Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology](#), CRepHS' research productivity is accomplished through highly collaborative interdisciplinary lab environments.

The Center's current research emphasis includes basic biology of reproductive health; multiple approaches to developmental biology with concentrations in cell biology, animal models, and genetics; studies of healthy human development; developmental endocrinology; neurosciences; translational imaging; medical device development; reproductive cancers; and population health research.

