

CRepHS NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 4, FISCAL YEAR 2026

► MESSAGE FROM DR. ENGLAND

I am deeply grateful to have served as the Director of CRepHS for the past five years. My gratitude extends to WashU, the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the CRepHS Division for the opportunities, support, and friendships that have shaped this chapter of my career. Together, we have built one of the world's leading and most inclusive environments for reproductive research, driven by the talent, dedication, and collaboration of our faculty, staff, and students.

I am proud of all we have accomplished together. Highlights include the successful launch of the Master's degree program, the recruitment of outstanding faculty, and the development of a strong operational foundation to support continued growth and excellence.

As I step away from the CRepHS leadership roles, I do so with tremendous pride and confidence in the future. Under the leadership of [Dr. Nardhy Gomez-Lopez](#), I know the division is well positioned to shape the future of reproductive sciences. I look forward to celebrating the discoveries and achievements yet to come.



Sarah K. England, PhD

*Alan A. and Edith L. Wolff Professor of Medicine
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology*



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PERSONNEL UPDATE

► NEW TEAM MEMBERS (as of date of publication, 8/3/26)

Audrey Casey

Undergraduate Researcher
Amargant i Riera lab



Casey

Alysha Everett, PhD

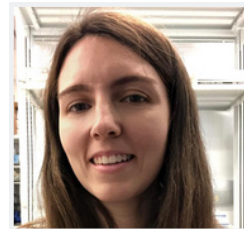
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Garr Barry lab



Everett

Pilar Irigoyen Rebosio, PhD

Visiting Research Associate
Santi lab



Rebosio

Ellie Smith

Undergraduate Researcher
Frolova lab



Smith

Emily Walton

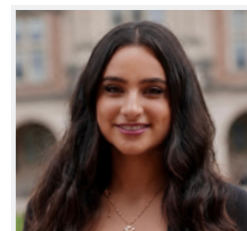
Visiting Researcher
Khabele lab



Walton

Arya Waza

Undergraduate Researcher
(ASPIRE program)
Santi lab



Waza

► MASTER'S PROGRAM APPLICANTS

The Master of Science in Reproductive Sciences (MSRS) program at WashU Medicine provides world-class training for research or clinical embryology careers. Applications open September 1st. Learn more at msrs.washu.edu.



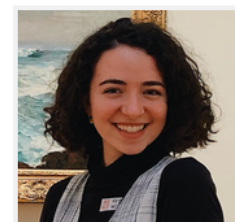
AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ **Dr. Celia Santi** was the co-chair of the American Society of Andrology (ASA) 51st Annual Meeting that took place in Scottsdale, Ariz. in April. At the event, **Shweta Bhagwat, PhD**, served as a moderator in a session on Artificial Intelligence in Male Fertility and Men's Health. She also presented a poster that included part of her unpublished work that explained the mechanistic insights on LPS-induced dysregulation of sperm function in the context of Bacterial Vaginosis. This work was supervised by her mentors, Drs. Celia Santi and Polina Lishko. Additionally, Dr. Bhagwat and **Juan Ferreira, PhD**, of the Santi lab, were both presented with NIH trainee travel awards.



Bhagwat, Santi, Ferreira

- ▶ **Eva Kareus** (DBBS pre-doc trainee in the Gomez-Lopez lab) presented her research "IL-9 at the Maternal-Fetal Interface Drives a Novel Immunological Mechanism of Preterm Labor and Birth" at IMMUNOLOGY2026™, the annual meeting of the American Association of Immunologists (AAI) in April. She received the Trainee Abstract Award at this meeting which was held in Boston.



Kareus

- ▶ In May, WashU researchers Polina Lishko, PhD, and **Celia Santi, MD, PhD**, were awarded a five-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grant to support collaborative research focused on defining mechanisms important for regulating male fertility. Read more here. Additionally, **Dr. Sarah England**, along with Drs. Lishko and Santi, received an NIH R13 conference grant that will help fund the 79th Annual Symposium of the Society of General Physiologists (SGP). The 2026 SGP Annual Meeting in September will be the first ever SGP meeting to focus on the important topic of reproductive systems and disorders in both men and women.





AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ In June, **Shweta Bhagwat, PhD**, postdoctoral research associate in the lab of Celia Santi, MD, PhD, received a prestigious NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) for her project titled "Study the impact of Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) toxins on sperm function." Her research is being funded by the NIH/Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.



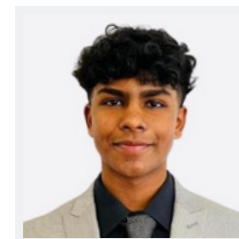
Bhagwat

- ▶ In June, **Juan Ferreira, PhD**, postdoctoral research associate in the lab of Celia Santi, MD, PhD, received a prestigious NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) for his project titled "Milk Excretion and Myoepithelial Cell Contractility: Modulation by the Na⁺-activated K⁺ Channels, SLO2.1." His research is being funded by the NIH/Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.



Ferreira

- ▶ **Tanish Sathish**, undergraduate researcher in the Garr Barry lab, was awarded an NSF travel award in June to attend the IEEE/ACM CHASE 2026 conference in Pittsburgh. The award recognizes students who have strong academic background and research potentials in the field of Connected Health, as demonstrated by their coursework and/or research experience.



Sathish

- ▶ For the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology's 2025 Team Member Awards, **Audrey Holland, MBA**, received the Excellence in Leadership Award, and **Julie Emmerich** received an Outstanding Job Performance Award. [Read more here.](#)



Holland



Emmerich

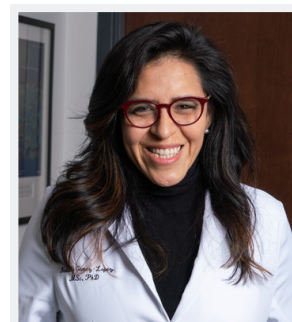


AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ▶ **Dineo Khabele, MD**, was selected to become a fellow in the 2026-2027 class of the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) program at Drexel University College of Medicine.
- ▶ Frolova lab trainees **Kevin Prifti** and **Ritu Dave** were selected for poster presentations at the Center for Women's Health Engineering Mini-Research Symposium 2026. Prifti was selected winner for the Reproductive Tissue Biomechanics and Regeneration category.
- ▶ **Nardhy Gomez-Lopez, PhD**, is a 2026 Ignition Awardee. She received the Washington National Biomedical Research Center (WaNBRC) WaNBRC Ignition Pilot Award in May. The purpose of this award is to explore innovative areas of nonhuman primate research and generate preliminary data to serve as a basis for submission of new research grant applications and/or subsequent clinical studies. Dr. Gomez-Lopez's study explores a potential treatment to prevent inflammation in the womb that can lead to serious injury for a developing fetus. Researchers are testing a specific therapy to see if it can block this harmful inflammation and improve health outcomes during pregnancy.
- ▶ **Toni Frolova, MD, PhD**, received a WashU DBBS "Excellence in Education" certificate. Nominated by students, this award honors faculty for their exceptional mentorship and steadfast commitment to the development of PhD students as scientists and professionals.



Khabele



Gomez-Lopez





PUBLICATIONS

► Q4 PUBLICATIONS (CRepHS lab members in **bold**)

New biomarkers for the detection of fetal death derived from large-scale proteomic analysis of maternal plasma. Romero R, Bhatti G, Chaiworapongsa T, **Gomez-Lopez N**, Meyyazhagan A, Chaemsaitong P, Jung E, Awonuga AO, Kim YM, Gudicha DW, Kim CJ, Bryant DR, Hassan SS, Tarca AL. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2026 Apr 2:S0002-9378(26)00179-1. doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2026.03.029. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41935727.

Single-cell spatiotemporal dissection of the human maternal-fetal interface. Wang C, Zhou Y, Wang Y, Guha TK, Luo Z, Mustafaraj A, McIntyre TI, Schwab ME, Davidson BR, Reeder GC, Wong RJ, **England SK**, Gonzalez JM, Belloch R, Combes AJ, Giudice LC, Erlebacher A, MacKenzie TC, Stevenson DK, Shaw GM, Snyder MP, Sun X, Winn VD, Fisher SJ, Li J. Nature. 2026 May; 653(8113):167-179. doi: 10.1038/s41586-026-10316-x. Epub 2026 Apr 8. PMID: 41951740.

Fetoplacental Circadian Rhythms Develop and Then Synchronize to the Mother In Utero. Nikhil KL, Bates K, Sapiro E, Amme JL, **McCarthy R**, Speck SL, Vasireddy V, Roberts E, Martin-Fairey CA, Domínguez-Romero ME, Cárdenas-García SP, **England SK**, Herzog ED. J Biol Rhythms. 2026 Aug;41(4):450-462. doi: 10.1177/07487304261435435. Epub 2026 Apr 10. PMID: 41960837.

Clinician perspectives on speculum exams in PPRM: a survey study. Burd J, Hensel D, Paul R, Zofkie A, **Frolova AI**, Kelly JC, Raghuraman N. Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol. 2026 Jun;322:115129. doi: 10.1016/j.ejogrb.2026.115129. Epub 2026 Apr 15. PMID: 42001557

Factors Associated with Nonadherence to American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Guidelines for Labor Arrest Disorders. Carbonell KV, Simpson L, Beermann S, Paul R, **Frolova A**, Kelly JC, Raghuraman N, Goodman B. Am J Perinatol. 2026 May 11. doi: 10.1055/a-2864-0651. Online ahead of print. PMID: 42057402

Effect of a Pregnancy Lifestyle Intervention Embedded Into a Home Visiting Program on Child Neurodevelopment. Farabi SS, Bass R, Mathur A, Schwarz C, **Woolfolk C**, Stein R, Klein S, Haire-Joshu D, Cahill AG. J Nutr Metab. 2026 Apr 29;2026:5518243. doi: 10.1155/jnme/5518243. eCollection 2026. PMID: 42065005.

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First Author

Optimization of the Multi-Channel Surface Electrogram Acquisition for Noninvasive Uterine Electrophysiology Imaging. **Gao H, Wang S, Lin Y, Jiang M, Li Y, Sun Q, Wen Z, Wang Y.** Ann Biomed Eng. 2026 Apr 10. doi: 10.1007/s10439-026-04072-2. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41963756.





PUBLICATIONS

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Prepregnancy obesity, gestational weight gain, and their relationship with maternal lipid levels at delivery across racial and ethnic populations. Laufer XX, **Frolova AI**, Raghuraman N, Martin SL, **England SK**, Stout MJ, **Garr Barry V**. Am J Physiol Heart Circ Physiol. 2026 Jun 1;330(6):H1985-H1995. doi: 10.1152/ajpheart.00927.2025. Epub 2026 May 7. PMID: 42095460.

African American Food Environments and Anti-Inflammatory Intake in Pregnancy. Walden N, Tabak R, Brown DS, Luby J, Warner B, Smyser T, Rogers C, Barch D, **England SK**, Oberly T, Smyser C, Iannotti L. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2026 May 13;23(5):646. doi: 10.3390/ijerph23050646. PMID: 42196738.

Optical coherence tomography enables optical biopsy of endometrial tissue for early cancer detection. Thakur S, Lin Y, Xu J, Nie H, Badwan S, Wang L, Sanders BE, Thaker PH, Hagemann AR, McCourt CK, **Khabele DM**, Powell MA, Mutch DG, Kuroki LM, Hagemann IS, Zhu Q. Npj Imaging. 2026 Jun 3;4(1):39. doi: 10.1038/s44303-026-00160-z. PMID: 42236613.

Maternal cardiometabolic health and the role of GLP-1 receptor agonists from preconception to postpartum: A review of evidence and opportunities. Vardhan S, Arnott C, Chen AX, **Frolova A**, Meka R, Raghuraman N, Vijay A, Yoo SG, Mahmoud Z. Am J Prev Cardiol. 2026 Feb 11;27:101471. doi: 10.1016/j.ajpc.2026.101471. eCollection 2026 Jun. PMID: 42291049. Review.

Multiple Chapters, One Career: Using Career Development Plans to Find Success and Satisfaction in Academic Oncology Across the Career Spectrum. Russell BM, Hall RD, Redmond KJ, Waisberg F, Rangachari D, Lopes G, **Khabele D**, Marrone KA. Am Soc Clin Oncol Educ Book. 2026 Jun;46(3):e519206. doi: 10.1200/EDBK-26-519206. Epub 2026 Jun 25. PMID: 42348812. Review.



Energy substrate preference and metabolic flexibility in quiescent and oxytocin-stimulated human myometrial cells. **Prifti KK, Dave RM, Mitchum KT, Rich JL**, Gill RM, **Mbadhi MN, Frolova AI**. iScience. 2026 Jun 9;29(6):116248. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2026.116248. eCollection 2026 Jun 19. PMID: 42317739.

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PUBLICATIONS

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New biomarkers for the detection of fetal death derived from large-scale proteomic analysis of maternal plasma. Romero R, Bhatti G, Chaiworapongsa T, **Gomez-Lopez N**, Meyyazhagan A, Chaemsathong P, Jung E, Awonuga AO, Kim YM, Gudicha DW, Kim CJ, Bryant DR, Hassan SS, Tarca AL. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2026 Apr 2:S0002-9378(26)00179-1. doi:10.1016/j.ajog.2026.03.029. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41935727.

High-risk Category II electronic fetal monitoring features in the first stage of labor is a risk factor for neonatal acidemia. Chaffay J, **Woolfolk C**, Kelly JC, **Frolova A**, Russell S, Macones GA, Cahill AG, Raghuraman N. American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM. 2026 Jul 14:102058.

A subclinical cytokine storm is present before the clinical diagnosis of amniotic fluid embolism: implications for the prediction and prevention of maternal death. Romero R, Meyyazhagan A, Gudicha DW, Chaiworsongsa T, Awonuga AO, Tarca AL, **Gomez-Lopez N**, Hassan SS. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2026 Jul;235(1):e3-e6. doi:10.1016/j.ajog.2026.02.039. PMID: 41765067.

Short and disrupted sleep is related to perceptions of neighborhood in pregnant African American women of low socioeconomic status. Farabi SS, Cade WT, Bass R, Stein RI, **Woolfolk C**, Schwarz CD, Tabak RG, Cahill AG, Klein S, Haire-Joshu D. Public Health in Practice. 2026 Jun 1;11:100749.



Mapping the human female reproductive tract. **Gomez-Lopez N**, **Lee S**. Nat Cell Biol. 2026 Jul;28(7):1347-1348. doi:10.1038/s41556-026-01989-7. PMID: 42393357.



First Author

Updates in group prenatal care research. **Woolfolk CL**. Curr Opin Obstet Gynecol. 2026 Jun 17. doi: 10.1097/GCO.0000000000001126. Online ahead of print. PMID: 42306917.





EVENTS & COLLABORATIONS

► Rothman Research Symposium

Clinical, basic, and translational research presentations took place at the 40th Annual Dr. David Rothman Research Symposium on the WashU Medical Campus in May. The event was co-organized and moderated by **Dr. Toni Frolova**.

Bisiayo Fashemi, PhD (Khabele lab postdoc) received the "Basic Science Award" for her presentation titled "Integrative single-cell analysis reveals AGRIN-driven metastatic signaling in ovarian cancer organoids."

Scientific talks were also given by **Sharvari Desphande, PhD** (Amargant i Riera lab), **Mostafa Eyada, MD** (Khabele lab), **Hansong Gao, PhD** (Wang lab), **Seungbaek Lee, PhD** (Gomez-Lopez lab) and **Kevin Prifti** (Frolova lab).



Dr. Fashemi & Dr. Dickson

► CRepHS-hosted Webinar

On May 19, CRepHS hosted a virtual talk with Dr. Patricia Labosky from the NIH Office of Strategic Coordination to discuss the NIH High-Risk, High-Reward Research (HRHR) program.

► CRepHS Collaborations

- A Clothing Swap & Donation Drop (Round 2!) took place in May for everyone on the 10th floor. Bunches of items were up-for-grabs!
- A CRepHS Summer Happy Hour was held on June 23rd in the nearby Grove neighborhood.

CRepHS Seminar Series

View the
2026-27
schedule by
clicking
here.



About the Center for Reproductive Health Sciences

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.



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