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Women’s Health Research Team

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About

Co-founded in 2013 by Andrea L. DeMaria, Ph.D., M.S. and Beth Sundstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H., the Women's Health Research Team (WHRT) includes over 25 active faculty, undergraduate and graduate students. The WHRT conducts qualitative and quantitative research to better understand reproductive and sexual health issues and behaviors among women. The team is committed to a multi- and interdisciplinary approach to women’s health research, drawing from the behavioral and clinical sciences, communication, and social marketing fields. Research findings extend concepts, methods, and theory in the fields of public health and communication.

Mission

The WHRT investigates health issues specific to women and adolescent girls, promotes interdisciplinary research collaborations, and communicates research findings and health-related information to empower women and girls in our community, South Carolina, and beyond.

Vision

To improve the health and well-being of women through praxis-oriented research that bridges the gap between theory and practice, informing the development of community-based public health interventions.
“The Women’s Health Research Team is committed to a multi- and interdisciplinary approach to women’s health research to empower women and girls in our community, South Carolina, and beyond.”
Co-Directors and Co-Founders

Andrea L. DeMaria, Ph.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Human Performance
Associate Director, Women’s and Gender Studies Program
Co-founded the Women’s Health Research Team in January 2013

Beth Sundstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication
Co-founded the Women’s Health Research Team in January 2013

Associate Director

Merissa Ferrara, Ph.D., M.A.
Associate Professor, Department of Communication
Joined the Women’s Health Research Team in Fall 2013
Faculty

Barbara Beckingham Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Geology of Environmental Geosciences
Joined the Women’s Health Research Team in Spring 2016

Cara Delay, PhD, M.A.
Associate Professor, Department of History
Director, Women’s and Gender Studies Program
Joined the Women’s Health Research Team in Fall 2015

Leslie Hart, Ph.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Human Performance
Joined the Women’s Health Research Team in Spring 2016

Christy Kollath-Cattano, Ph.D., M.A.
Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Human Performance
Joined the Women’s Health Research Team in Fall 2015
Graduate and Undergraduate Students

Graduate Research Assistants
• Helen Adams
• Kristin Brig
  • Paid Assistantship, History
• Annabel Jones
  • Paid Assistantship, Communication
• Stephanie Meier
  • Paid Assistantship; the New Morning Foundation, Choose Well SC
• Stephanie McInnis
  • Paid Assistantship, Health and Human Performance

Undergraduate Research Assistants
• Kendall Banks
• Katie Booth
• Ellie Flock
• Malka Fox-Epstein
• Colby Gabel
• Maja Grzejdziak
• Mamiko Higa
• Anna Kooper
• Hannah Manzi
• Grace Moxley
• Jenesha Nance
• Karishma Patel
• Ellie Smith
• Kianna Thomas
• Kerri Vyge
• Kerry Wischusen
• Abigail Wiseley

Communication Specialists
• Ashlan Bishop
• Kate Carmody
• Nely Rusher-Clark
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</table>
| Reproductive Health Histories: A South Carolina Women’s Health Oral History Project (February 2016 – Present) | **2016 Summer Undergraduate Research with Faculty (SURF) Grant, Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities, College of Charleston**  
**Awarded: $6,500**  
College of Charleston Research and Development Grant  
**Awarded: $5,000**                                                                                                                                 |
| Increasing Long-Acting Reversible Contraception Use: A Theory-Based Health Communication Campaign (January 2016 – Present) | **2016 SURF Grant**  
**Awarded: $6,500**  
**2016 LARC Messaging in South Carolina Partner Grant with the New Morning Foundation, Choose Well SC**  
**Awarded: $15,000**  
**2016 Research and Development Grant, Women’s and Gender Studies Program, College of Charleston**  
**Awarded: $1,000**                                                                                                                                 |
| Formative Research to Develop a Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) at the College of Charleston (October 2015 – Present) | **2015 College of Charleston Division of Student Affairs Partnership**  
**Awarded: $10,000**  
**2016 SURF Grants**  
**Awarded: $13,000**                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Fulfilling the Promise of Telemedicine: Increasing Health Care Access among Rural Women in South Carolina (May 2015 – August 2015) | **2015 Faculty Research and Development Grant, The Graduate School, College of Charleston**  
**Awarded: $4,000**  
**2015 SURF Grants**  
**Awarded: $19,500**  
**2015 Dean’s Discretionary Funds Awards, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Charleston**  
**Awarded: $2,000**  
**2014 Research and Development Grant, Women’s and Gender Studies Program, College of Charleston**  
**Awarded: $500**                                                                                                                                 |
| Investigating the Effectiveness of Castor Oil as a Natural Alternative to Labor Induction (January 2015 – August 2015) | **Community partner: Charleston Birth Place**                                                                                                                                                               |
### Projects & Grants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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| Designing, Implementing and Evaluating a Campus- and Community-Wide Bystander Intervention Campaign | 2014 Research and Development Grant, Department of Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $2,000  
2014 Center for Partnerships to Improve Education, Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $1,500  
People Against Rape  
**Awarded:** $2,500 |
| Understanding Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavioral Determinants for Contraceptive Use Decision-Making Among Reproductive-Aged Women | 2014 Faculty Research and Development Grant, The Graduate School, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $4,000  
2014 Summer Enrichment Grant, Honors College, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $3,500  
2014 SURF Grants  
**Awarded:** $8,500  
2014 Dean’s Discretionary Funds Award, School of Humanities and Social Science, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $1,000  
2013 Faculty Research and Development Grant, Department of Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $959.70 |
| Beyond “the Pill:” A Qualitative Analysis of Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) | 2014 SURF Grant  
**Awarded:** $6,500  
2013 Dean’s Discretionary Funds Award, School of Humanities and Social Science, College of Charleston  
**Awarded:** $1,000 |
| Cross-sectional Study to Assess Phthalate Metabolites and Phthalate Exposure Behaviors among College Women | **Coming Fall 2016** |
Additional Women’s Health Research Team Grants
- 2015 South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families: Partnership Grant
  Received: $5,000
- 2015 School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs, College of Charleston: Pilot Program to Support Interdisciplinary Research Groups
  Received: $100
- 2015 Las Libres Documentary Film Screening at Sottile Theatre
  Received: $650, Tell Them
    $500, Women’s and Gender Studies Program
    $500, B.A. in Public Health Program
    $100 Global Awareness Forum
- 2015 Sustainable Cycles Campus Event
  Received: $500, Women’s and Gender Studies Program

In 2015-2016, the Women’s Health Research Team secured over $121,850 in grant funding.
**Outcomes**

**Publications**

* Denotes Student Author


Outcomes

Publications (continued)


• **Featured in:** Health Communication Science Digest. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). October 2015 (Vol. 6, Issue 10e).


Manuscripts under Review


*Meier, S., Sundstrom, B., DeMaria, A.L., Delay, C. Beyond a legacy of coercion: Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) and social justice.


Sundstrom, B., DeMaria, A.L., Ferrara, M., *Smith, E., & *McInnis, S. “People are struggling in this area:” Formative audience research to develop a rural telehealth intervention.
Manuscripts in Preparation


*Higa, M., DeMaria , A.L., Sundstrom, B. Health information seeking behaviors among women in rural South Carolina: The role of deliberation in synthesizing multiple sources.

*Smith, E., Sundstrom, B., DeMaria , A. L. “Nobody ever asks me:” Formative audience research to address rural health disparities utilizing a reproductive justice framework.


Conference Presentations


Outcomes

Abstracts Submitted to Conferences

Sundstrom, B., DeMaria, A.L., Ferrara, M., McInnis S., Meier S., Smith, E., Moxley, G.E., & Billings D. (2016, Sept.). Your birth control may not be working as hard as you: A social marketing campaign to increase access to highly effective contraception. Submitted to European Social Marketing Conference, Espoo, Finland.


Women's Health Research Team with Stephanie McInnis.
February 17 - Edited

Graduate Research Assistant and College of Charleston Department of Communication Master's Program student, Stephanie McInnis, kicked off our #LARC campaign this week by presenting our research at The Graduate School of the University of Charlesto... Continue Reading

We are excited to announce that our paper, "A Qualitative Study of Young Women's Beliefs About Intrauterine Devices: Fear of Infertility," is now available online ahead of print at the Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health. Click here: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/... Continue Reading

Women's Health Research Team with Andrea Courtney and 2 others.
March 13 - Edited

Did you happen to pick up one of our Calm and #LARC On buttons at yesterday's #YIAF2016 event? We love to see how you are sporting your photos :) 

WHRT CofC 2/20/16
We're proud of these research assistants for receiving a combined total of $26,000 in SURF grants for research!

WHRT CofC 3/24/16
#LARC includes both #IUDs and #Implants. Women choose these for their ease and greater than 99% effectiveness!
Events & Outreach

Bee Day

We collaborate and advocate for reproductive health!

Yes! I’m a Feminist

We share messages of empowerment!
Events & Outreach

Podcast

*Contraception #351*
Andrea L. DeMaria, Beth Sundstrom
Science for the People [http://www.scienceforthepeople.ca/episodes/contraception](http://www.scienceforthepeople.ca/episodes/contraception)

Webinar/Lectures available online

*Women’s Voices*
Beth Sundstrom
South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families
[https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4996627610871929867](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4996627610871929867)

*Women’s Health in the Digital Age*
Beth Sundstrom

*Reproductive Justice and Women’s Voices: Health Communication Across the Lifespan.*
Beth Sundstrom

Invited Presentations

DeMaria, A.L. (2015, Apr.). Your hair down there: Pubic hair removal and genital self-image. University of Tennessee Sex Week UT. Knoxville, TN.

DeMaria, A.L. (2015, Apr.). Can’t measure up: Body image workshop. University of Tennessee Sex Week UT. Knoxville, TN.

Service Learning Event

*Volunteering at Chicora Place Community Gardens with Metanoia, April 8, 2016*

Numerous On Campus Presentations

South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families Blog

- **Hairy to Hairless**
  Nely Rusher-Clark
- **Keep Calm and LARC On**
  Stephanie Meier
- **Myth of Menstruation**
  Stephanie Meier
Las Libres
The story continues...

Supported by:
Public Health Program
Women’s & Gender Studies
Global Awareness Forum

Tuesday, February 24, 2015
3:30 p.m. at Sottile Theatre
Free and Open to the Public

Followed by:
Yes, I’m a Feminist! Reception
5:30 p.m. Cistern Yard
Women’s & Gender Studies and The Women’s Health Research Team present:

A Path Appears

**When:** Tuesday, February 23rd at 4:15 pm

**Where:** Robert Scott Small 235

**Snacks and beverages will be served**

From the directors of Half The Sky, A Path Appears takes viewers on a journey across the country, and across the globe, to drive home the universality of gender inequality and the roots of vulnerability. The series leads viewers to a deeper understanding of these critical issues and the proven methods of bringing about change.

**Free and open to the public**

Followed by:

Yes, I’m A Feminist! Event Cistern Yard at 5:30pm
FREE LUNCH! TEACHING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Sustainable Cycles

DATE: 4/21
PLACE: STERN 205
TIME: 12pm - 1pm

Did You Know? The average woman will spend $2000 on menstrual products in her lifetime, be exposed to dangerous chemicals, and generate a garbage truck worth of trash - all for having her period. We invite you to discover another way.

Join the Women’s Health Research Team and Office of Sustainability for a body-positive discussion about how we handle our cycles! Lunch will be provided!

For more information, visit: http://sustainablecycles.org/

College of Charleston
Women’s and Gender Studies Program
Campus & Community Campaigns

It’s Your Place: A Bystander Intervention Campaign

It’s Your Place Student Video (6,500+ views): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LskOE9xDuzQ

It’s Your Place PSA Video (1,400+ views): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlcfJgtvSQ

90% of rapes are committed by an acquaintance
It’s your place to prevent sexual assault:
You’re not ruining a good time.

1 in 5
“One in five women is sexually assaulted while in college.”

Increasing LARC Use at the College of Charleston

Your birth control may not be working as hard as you

The IUD and implant are 99% effective
The pill is only 91% effective
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Visit Bedsider.org for more information.

Did you know female doctors
Use the IUD
3x more than other women?

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Why think about birth control every day?
Ask your doctor about the IUD today.

Doctors prefer the intrauterine device (IUD) because it is safe, easy and effective
Small in size - big in success - IUDs are 99% effective at preventing pregnancy
IUDs should be FREE because of the Affordable Care Act.
Faculty Awards

Andrea L. DeMaria, Ph.D., M.S.
- Outstanding Faculty of the Year, School of Education, Health, and Human Performance, Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, College of Charleston (2015)

Beth Sundstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.
- Outstanding Faculty of the Year, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, College of Charleston (2016)
- Crescent Award, South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families, Member of the Year (2015)

Merissa Ferrara, Ph.D., M.A.
- Distinguished Teaching Award, Celebration of Faculty, College of Charleston (2016)

Research Assistant Awards

Katie Booth
- Fulbright Award Alternate

Ellie Flock
- Humanities and Social Sciences Scholar, College of Charleston (2016)
- Rotary Scholar

Colby Gabel
- Most Outstanding Student in Public Health, Department of Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston (2015)

Hannah Manzi
- SALA New Student Leader Award (2015)

Stephanie Meier
- Outstanding Student of the Year, the Graduate School, Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, College of Charleston (2016)

Jenesha Nance
- Outstanding Student of the Year, the Honors College, Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, College of Charleston (2016)

Nely Rusher-Clarck
- Humanities and Social Science Scholar, College of Charleston (2016)

Ellie Smith
- Outstanding Student of the Year, School of Education, Health and Human Performance, Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, College of Charleston (2016)
- Most Honorable Student in Public Health, Department of Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston (2016)

Abigail Wiseley
- Most Honorable Student in Exercise Science, Department of Health and Human Performance, College of Charleston (2015)
Future Plans

Graduates and Success Stories

- Andrea L. DeMaria, Ph.D., M.S.
  Accepted a faculty position at Purdue University in the College of Health and Human Sciences, effective August 2016

- Helen Adams, MA
  Working in the Office of Public Relations at the Medical University of South Carolina

- Annalise Baker-Whitcomb
  Working as a Program Assistant at the Medical University of South Carolina Center for Telehealth

- Ashlan Bishop
  Pursuing a Masters in Education at University of Florida

- Katie Booth
  Pursing employment opportunities in the field of public health

- Ellie Flock
  Pursuing a Masters in Global Health at King’s College London as a Rotary Scholar

- Colby Gabel
  Working as a Public Health Analyst Intern at RTI International
  Applying to Public Health Graduate Programs

- Mamiko Higa
  Working for a clinical research company as a clinical research coordinator and working as a part-time grant coordinator with the Smoke Free Lowcountry Coalition

- Annabel Jones, MA
  Working as a Digital Communication Specialist with Method Savvy

- Stephanie McInnis
  Pursuing a Master of Communication at the University of Charleston, SC, College of Charleston

- Stephanie Meier
  Pursuing a Master of Communication at the University of Charleston, SC, College of Charleston

- Karishma Patel
  Accepted into the Master of Health Administration Program at the Medical University of South Carolina

- Jackie Payne
  Obtained a Master of Public Health (MPH) at Emory University

- Nely Rusher-Clark
  Pursuing employment opportunities

- Ellie Smith
  Pursuing a Master of Communication at the University of Charleston, SC, College of Charleston

- Abigail Wisely
  Obtaining clinical hours for Physician Assistant School
Acknowledgements

On-Campus and Community Partners

Thank you for your support!

- Advocates for Youth
- Cervical Cancer-Free South Carolina
- Charleston Birth Place
- Charleston County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council
- Choose Well
- College of Charleston
  - Department of Communication
  - Department of Health and Human Performance
  - Division of Student Affairs
  - Honors College and Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (URCA)
  - Interdisciplinary Public Health Program
  - School of Education, Health and Human Performance
  - School of Humanities and Social Sciences
  - Student Health Services
  - The University of Charleston, South Carolina
  - Women’s and Gender Studies Program
- Medical University of South Carolina
- The New Morning Foundation
- People Against Rape
- South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families
- Tell Them
- University of South Carolina
We believe women’s health is Vital.

We believe in practice based on evidence. We advocate for reproductive justice and the empowerment of women’s voices and experiences to inform public health practice. Research must reflect the needs of individuals.

Women’s voices improve health outcomes.

We believe that research can address health care disparities among women. We believe in creative solutions to public health problems.

Healthy women create healthy societies with unlimited potential.

Healthy women have options in reproductive health.

We listen.

We believe that access to health care is a right. We believe that change is possible.

We believe that women should have options in reproductive health.

We believe women’s health is more than just reproduction.

We believe in practice based on evidence.

We raise the voices of women because their voices have power.

Interdisciplinary research is where innovation happens.

Women’s health research team

As women’s health researchers, we bridge the gap between theory and practice. Through education, empowerment, and collaboration, we improve the health of our community, South Carolina, and beyond.
Andrea L. DeMaria, Ph.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor of Public Health
Department of Health and Human Performance
Co-Director, Women’s Health Research Team
Interim Associate Director, Women’s and Gender Studies Program
demariaa@cofc.edu

Beth L. Sundstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Faculty, Public Health
Co-Director, Women’s Health Research Team
Graduate Faculty, University of Charleston, South Carolina
BLS@cofc.edu