

Urological Health in Women Across the Lifespan: An Interdisciplinary Research Network

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Background

- Urologic problems are common in women across the lifespan and significantly impact their daily life, yet remain understudied.
- Urinary incontinence (UI) direct costs for women are over \$12 billion in the United States.¹
- UI affects approximately 24% of 18-44 year old women and nearly 50% of community-dwelling women over the age of 65.²
- The stigma of UI prevents the overwhelming majority of women with UI from discussing symptoms with their healthcare provider.²
- Over 50% of patients with a serious illness rated bowel and bladder incontinence a fate worse than death.³

Network Rationale

The Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR®) recognized the need to have researchers and clinicians work collaboratively to define the current state of knowledge, gaps, and recommendations for future directions in urological health in women. The Network model rests of the following key principles:

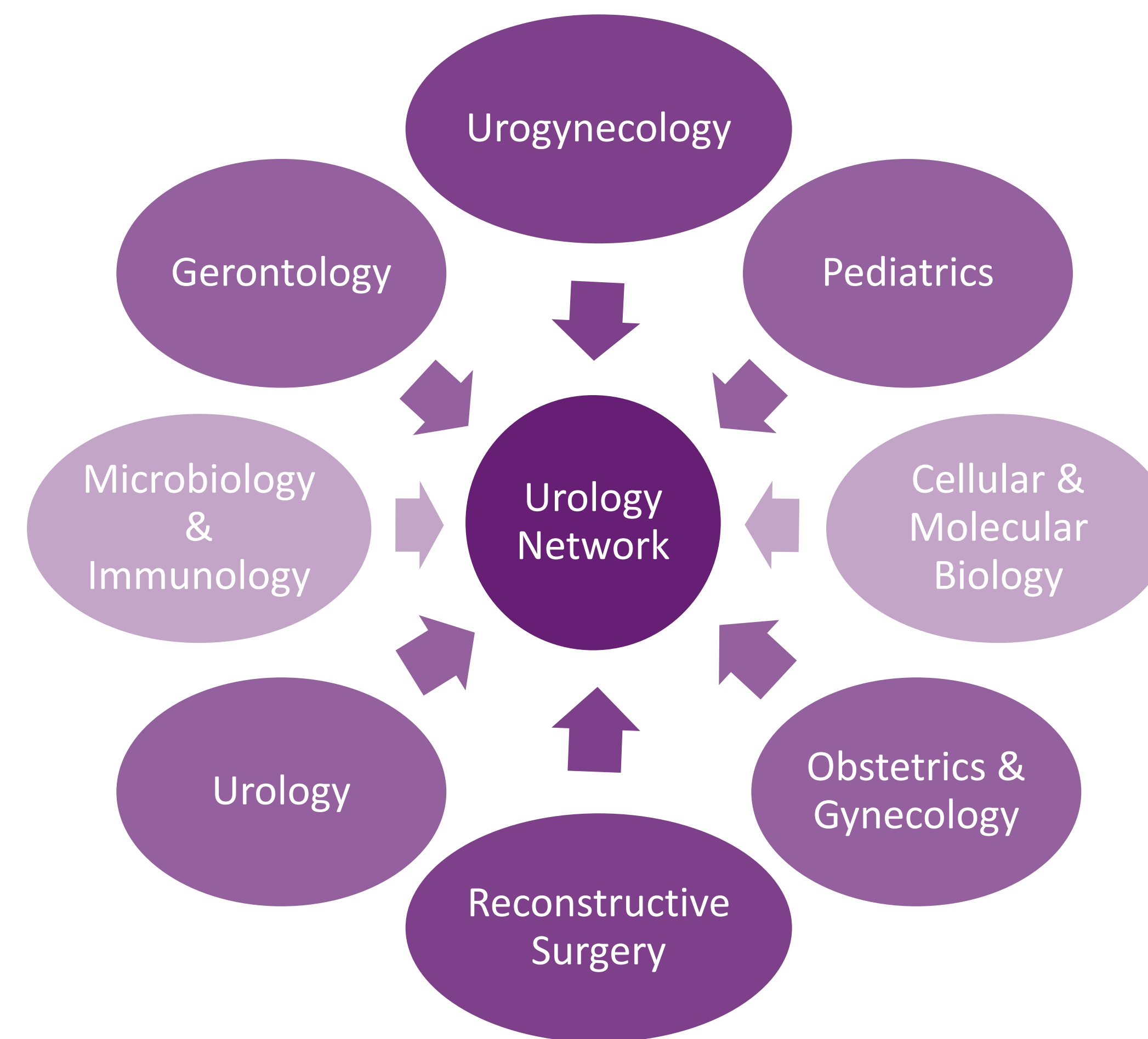
- **The best people**
- **Multi-year**
- **Interdisciplinary and multi-sites**
- **Peer-driven science and the right question**

Typical Network Timeline

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| Year 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Formation; Elect Chair • Brainstorm ideas, identify knowledge gaps and needs • Establish collaborative relationships |
| Years 2-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and implement studies or programs based on gaps and needs • Develop products • Establish collaborative relationships |
| Year 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize products • Evaluate goals and products • Hold symposium to highlight products |

Network Formation

To form an Interdisciplinary Network and promote this style of collaboration required careful selection of members across various disciplines and their commitment to frequent meetings over several years. The Urological Health in Women Across the Lifespan Interdisciplinary Network was launched in 2014.



Mission

Raise awareness of the impact of bladder health on women's well-being across the lifespan. Since unhealthy bladders disproportionately affect women and girls the Network aims to:

- Review current information and identify knowledge gaps and make recommendations to inform research, policy, and education.
- Raise awareness through advocacy among agencies, patient advocacy groups and medical societies.
- Promote education among health care providers, educators, and the general public

Current Members

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Mueller, MD, MSME, Loyola University* • Margot Damaser, PhD, Cleveland Clinic ** • Cindy Amundsen, MD, Duke University • Toby Chai, MD, Yale University • Clare Close, MD, Close Pediatric Urology • Michael DiSanto, PhD, Rowan University • Matthew Fraser, PhD, Duke University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephanie Kielb, MD, Northwestern University • George Kuchel, MD, University of Connecticut • Elizabeth Mueller, MD, Loyola University • Mary Palmer, PhD, RN, UNC at Chapel Hill • Candace Parker-Autry, MD, Wake Forest University • Alan Wolfe, PhD, Loyola University |
|--|--|
- *Network Chair; ** Network Co-Chair

Products

Educational Outreach

WOMEN ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY UROLOGICAL CONDITIONS COMPARED WITH MEN

- 90% of women with urinary incontinence never discuss their symptoms with their healthcare providers
- 53% of women will have at least one urinary tract infection during their lifetime
- Direct care for urinary incontinence costs \$452.8 million for women as opposed to \$10.3 million for men in 2000

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Urinary Incontinence (UI): For Some, A Fate Worse Than Death

Society for Women's Health Research's Interdisciplinary Network on Urological Health in Women

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SWHR®

A national nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., and founded in 1990, SWHR is widely recognized as the thought leader in research on biological differences in disease and is dedicated to transforming women's health through science, advocacy and education.

References

1. Wilson et al. *Annual direct cost of urinary incontinence.* *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 2001. 98(3): 398-406.
2. Losada et al. *Expert Panel Recommendations on Lower Urinary Tract Health of Women Across Their Life Span.* *Journal of Women's Health*, 2016. 25(11): 1086-1096.
3. Rubin et al. *States Worse Than Death Among Hospitalized Patients With Serious Illnesses.* *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 2016. 176(10): 1557-1559.

Raising Awareness of Bladder Health in our Schools

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the detrimental effect of urine and stool holding
- Understand the effect of school toileting behavior on bladder health
- Understand the need for educating students, parents, teachers and principals about bladder health and the need for healthy bladder and toileting programs in our schools

EVIDENCE BASED REFERENCES

1. Kiri, Chantana-A. *Open U: Open-ended writing in elementary schools: results from a cross-sectional teacher survey.* *Society for Pediatric Urology 67 Annual Meeting 2015.*
2. *Children's Urinary Tract Infections: Etiology, Pathogenesis, Reliability and generalizability across gender and nationality.* *Baron R and Thewissen 1989; 27:19-23*
3. *Urinary Tract Infections in Children: A Review of the Literature.* *Journal of Urology 2006; 175: 1589-1592*
4. *Female Aged and Bacteriuria: Diagnosis and management of dysfunctional voiding.* *Can J Urol 2006; 13(2): 134-41*
5. *Boys' and Girls' Urinary Incontinence: Prevalence of urinary incontinence in men, women, and children—current evidence.* *Journal of the South International Association on Urology 2010; 20(2): 285-90*
6. *Urinary Tract Infections in Children: A Review of the Literature.* *Journal of Urology 2006; 175: 1589-1592*
7. *Surveys: Teachers' knowledge of normal and abnormal elimination patterns in elementary school children.* *J of School Nursing December 2003 21: 346-349*

Huffington Post Blog Series

- One More Mom-To-Teenage-Daughter Talk: The School Bathroom.
- What is a Healthy Bladder?
- School Bathroom Habits Impact Life-Long Bladder Health: Opening the Door to the Girls' Room.

Peer Reviewed Articles

- Liliana Losada et al., "Expert Panel Recommendations on Lower Urinary Tract Health of Women across their Lifespan." *Journal of Women's Health* 25, no. 11(2016): 1086-1096.
- Mueller et al., "Letter to the Editor: Women's Urological Health as a Priority to the Woman Well Visit." *Women's Health Issues* 26, no. 4 (2016): 476-477.