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**Women's Health E-News**  
**Spring 2008**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWS AT VCU**

Susan Kornstein, MD, Professor of Psychiatry and Executive Director, Institute for Women's Health, has been elected President of the **International Association for Women's Mental Health (IAWMH)** for a three-year term. Dr. Kornstein served as Scientific Program Chair and a keynote speaker at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Women's Mental Health in Melbourne, Australia, March 17-20, 2008. Researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and advocates from 50 countries participated in the Congress, which was sponsored by IAWMH but also included support from other organizations including the World Health Organization, the World Federation of Mental Health, the World Psychiatric Association, the Marce Society, and the International Menopause Society.

**Women's Health 2008: The 16th Annual Congress** was held in Williamsburg, VA on March 28-30, 2008. The Congress is the premier women's health conference in the country, presented by the VCU Institute for Women's Health and the *Journal of Women's Health*. The theme of the Congress is translating cutting-edge women's health research into practice. Over 600 health care providers were in attendance, representing 30 states. The impressive list of speakers included nationally known experts from VCU and academic medical centers across the U.S. Dr. Wendy Klein served as Program Chair and Dr. Susan Kornstein as Co-Chair. See details at [www.bioconferences.com/wh](http://www.bioconferences.com/wh)

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual VCU Women's Health Research Day** was held on April 16, 2008 chaired by Dr. Ann Nichols-Casebolt, Associate Vice President for Research Development. Over 175 faculty, staff, and students attended, and 56 research posters were presented. The keynote speaker was Kathleen T. Brady, Professor of Psychiatry from the Medical University of South Carolina, who spoke on "*Knocking Down Silos: Fostering Women's Health & Gender-Based Research.*" A panel of VCU women's health research experts discussed translational research in women's health and how to integrate basic and clinical research with patient care. The panel featured Drs. Dace Svikis, Lori Keyser-Marcus, Linda Meloy, and Pamela Dillon. The Elizabeth Fries Young Investigator Award was given to Ph.D. fellow Guadalupe Estrada for her poster entitled "Neutrophils Alter Expression of Vascular Smooth Muscle Collagen Regulating Genes." Five other awards, for top poster in each category (basic science, behavioral, and clinical), as well as honorable mentions,

were presented. For more details on the submitted abstracts and winning posters, please visit: [http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/research/research\\_day\\_2008.html](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/research/research_day_2008.html)  
Or check the VCU View article with photo:  
[http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu\\_view/pages.aspx?nid=2485](http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu_view/pages.aspx?nid=2485)

### **On the Road to NIH Funding**

The Center for Clinical and Translational Research in the Office of Research, the Center for Health Disparities, and the Institute for Women's Health conducted a workshop "On the Road to NIH Funding" for VCU researchers on Tuesday May 6, 2008. The workshop featured speakers from six NIH Institutes and served as an opportunity for faculty to spend one-on-one time with NIH staff and learn about resources for researchers at VCU. Dr. Pamela Dillon from the CCTR and Dr. Dace Svikis from IWH organized the event. For more information view article: [http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu\\_view/pages.aspx?nid=2486](http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu_view/pages.aspx?nid=2486)

### **AMWA Names Journal of Women's Health as Official Publication**

The *Journal of Women's Health* has been named the official journal of the American Medical Women's Association. AMWA is devoted to the advancement of women in medicine and the improvement of women's health. The *Journal of Women's Health* is a core multidisciplinary journal dedicated to the diseases and conditions that are prevalent among women, as well as diseases that present differently in women than in men. Dr. Susan Kornstein serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal for Women's Health*, and Dr. Wendy Klein is Deputy Editor. For more details, please visit: <http://www.amwa-doc.org/index.cfm?objectid=06334A7B-A826-D6B6-61B55B3F2AA952E5>

### **Two Women Faculty Receive Professional Achievement Awards at VCU**

The Women in Science, Dentistry and Medicine (WISDM) Professional Achievement Award was presented to two Virginia Commonwealth University faculty members for their special contributions, dedication, leadership, mentorship and accomplishments in the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry. The honorees, who were recognized during the 16th Annual Pathways to Leadership conference on March 21, 2008, include Ellen Brock, M.D., Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the School of Medicine, and Bridget Ellen Byrne, D.D.S., Ph.D., Professor in the School of Dentistry. To view the full article, please visit: [http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu\\_view/pages.aspx?nid=2426](http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu_view/pages.aspx?nid=2426)

### **VCU Health System Recognized for Women's Advancement**

For the second consecutive year, the National Association for Female Executives, NAFE, has named the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System one of five top nonprofits in the country. In addition, the VCU Health System has been named to the 2008 Honor Roll by the Center for Companies that Care, making the VCU Health System one of 41 companies nationwide selected for the quality of its work environment. NAFE's mission is to encourage women's advancement by honoring companies that demonstrate strong numbers of women in top positions and in the pipeline. To view the full article, please visit: [http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu\\_view/pages.aspx?nid=2415](http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu_view/pages.aspx?nid=2415)

The Institute for Women's Health celebrated April as **Women and Girl's Wellness Month** on April 25, 2008 by providing experts, including Brigitte Sicut, PharmD, Ann Dunbar, and Valerie Coleman, RN, who discussed such issues as calcium deficiency, posture assessment, and breast health. The event took place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Main Hospital, Gateway.

### **VCU Medical Center Docs Recognized as Top Docs in Richmond/America**

Physicians from the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center achieved high marks from their peers in Richmond Magazine's latest Top Docs survey. In addition, a number of VCU Medical Center physicians also were recognized as Best Doctors in America. Included in the list is a number of women including: Joann Bodurtha, Genetics; Cecilia Boardman, Gynecological Oncology; Andrea Pozez, Plastic/Reconstructive Surgery; Catherine Matthews, Urogynecology; Susan Kornstein, Psychiatry; Bela Sood, Child/Adolescent Psychiatry; Lenore Buckley, Rheumatology; Gilda Cardenosa, Radiology; Ann Fulcher, Radiology; and Julia Nunley, Dermatology. For full article visit:

[http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu\\_view/pages.aspx?nid=2443](http://www.news.vcu.edu/vcu_view/pages.aspx?nid=2443)

### **Dr. Wendy Klein Discusses on NPR Why Southern Women Living Shorter**

Women in the southern part of the U.S. are dying earlier than before, according to a new study of life expectancy among women in the deep south and lower Midwest. The study's lead author, Dr. Christopher Murray, explains the findings. And Dr. Wendy Klein, who specializes in women's health, discusses what could be causing the change. For more details, and to listen to the story, please visit:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89906896>

## **NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWS**

### **National Women's Health Week**

The 9th annual National Women's Health Week will kick off on Sunday, Mother's Day, May 11, 2008 and will end Saturday, May 17, 2008. National Women's Health Week empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action. The nationwide initiative, coordinated by the Office on Women's Health (OWH, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), encourages women to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier and happier life. During the week, families, communities, businesses, government, health organizations and other groups work together to educate women about steps they can take to improve their physical and mental health and prevent disease, such as:

- Engaging in physical activity most days of the week
- Making healthy food choices
- Visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and preventive screenings
- Avoiding risky behaviors, like smoking and not wearing a seatbelt

At VCU, you can celebrate Women's Health Week by visiting or contacting the Charlotte K. Roberts Women's Health Resource Center for information and resources on health and wellness for yourself or your family. Contact Elaine Minor@327-8857 or [minorec@vcu.edu](mailto:minorec@vcu.edu) or visit the website <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>

### **Lip Balms and Glosses May Boost Skin Cancer Risks**

(HealthDay News) -- Shiny lip balms and glosses may attract ultraviolet rays and increase the risk of skin cancer, warns a dermatologist at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas. Dr. Christine Brown noted that protecting your lips from harmful sun rays is as important as using sunscreen to protect your skin. But a recent study found that less than 25 percent of Americans use some form of lip protection. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.4women.gov/news/english/614452.htm>

### **Disordered Eating Is Widespread Among U.S. Women**

(HealthDay News) -- Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of young American women report disordered eating behaviors, and 10 percent report symptoms of eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorder, a new survey finds. The findings -- from an online poll of more than 4,000 women between the ages of 25 and 45 -- found that 75 percent eat, think and behave abnormally around food. The survey was conducted by *SELF* magazine in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. To view the full article, please visit: <http://www.4women.gov/news/english/614866.htm>

### **Gene Predicts Breast Cancer Prognosis**

(HealthDay News) -- A protein that stops the spread of breast cancer tumors in mice can predict which malignancies might spread, a new study suggests. The gene, called bromodomain protein (Brd4), when added to breast cancer cells in mice, produced a unique gene signature, which was also detected in human breast cancer patients. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.4women.gov/news/english/614709.htm>

### **Mammograms Still a Good Idea for Elderly Women**

(HealthDay News) -- In women aged 80 and older, regular mammograms reduce the risk of being diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer, but only about 20 percent of U.S. women in this age group have regular screenings, a new study shows. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.4women.gov/news/english/614699.htm>

### **Breast Cancer Grows Faster in Younger Women**

(HealthDay News) -- While the rate at which breast cancer tumors grow varies among patients, that growth tends to be faster among younger women, Norwegian researchers report. These findings may help in planning and evaluating screening programs, clinical trials and other studies, the researchers say. Using a new mathematical model, the scientists were also able to estimate the numbers of breast cancers detectable by mammography. This is a new approach to estimating

the growth rate of tumors and the ability of mammograms to find them. . . The report was published in the May 8 issue of the online journal *Breast Cancer Research*. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.4women.gov/news/english/615301.htm>

### **Breast Feeding May Boost Children's IQ**

(Reuters) -- A new study provides some of the best evidence to date that breast-feeding can make children smarter, an international team of researchers said. Children whose mothers breast-fed them longer and did not mix in baby formula scored higher on intelligence tests, the researchers in Canada and Belarus reported. About half the 14,000 babies were randomly assigned to a group in which prolonged and exclusive breast-feeding by the mother was encouraged at Belarussian hospitals and clinics. The mothers of the other babies received no special encouragement. Those in the breast-feeding encouragement group were, on average, breast-fed longer than the others and were less likely to have been given formula in a bottle. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24482257/>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Women's Health Virginia's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Women's Health": Stepping over the Lines – Young Women's Risk-Taking, Time for Concern**

Friday, June 13, 2008, Alumni Hal, 211, Emmet Street, Charlottesville, Virginia  
Experts will examine behaviors of girls, teens, and young women that pose significant health and wellness concerns, and ways in which all who care can make a difference. Topics include current understanding regarding when and why girls, teens and young women engage in risky behaviors, as well as risk taking behaviors and their physical and mental health impacts regarding a number of issues, and ways to identify those at risk. For more information, visit

[www.womenshealthvirginia.org](http://www.womenshealthvirginia.org)

### **How to Treat a Woman: Strategies for Healthcare & Self-Care**

The Institute for Women's Health continues its series of brown-bag seminars focused on women's health for all health care professionals. Njeri Jackson, Ph.D., Office of the Provost, and John Pierce, MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology, will speak on "Patients Don't Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care: Making the Most of the Patient-Provider Encounter" on Wednesday, September 10th, from 12:00 to 1:00 in the Learning Center at the MCV Main Hospital. To view the flyer: <http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/IWH-HTTW2008Seminars.pdf>

### **Massey Cancer Center's 'Sneakers and Genes' Program**

The VCU Massey Cancer Center is offering a new program to increase breast-health awareness among women ages 18–35 whose mothers had breast cancer. "Sneakers and Genes for Daughters" will provide participants with three weekly sessions to help daughters understand their own risk for breast cancer and be more informed on cancer risk-reduction to help improve their quality of life.

The first three-session series will be held at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden on May 5, 12 and 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Registration is required by calling 804-828-1561. For more information, contact [albutler@vcu.edu](mailto:albutler@vcu.edu)

## UPCOMING CLASSES

### Nutrition – Weight Loss – Walking – Diabetic Dining

- Diabetic Dining Made Easy: The class repeats the first Monday and Wednesday morning of each month. Call 560-8955 to register.
- Choose to Lose®: 8-Week Weight Loss Program (offered fall & winter) Call 560-8955 to register.
- Food & Fitness: 2 hour programs offered in spring. Call 560-8955 to register.
- Cholesterol Lowering Class: Meets the evening of May 12<sup>th</sup> and the morning of May 13<sup>th</sup>. Call 560-8955 to register.

Sign up to receive the “Your Nutrition News” electronic newsletter. To subscribe, please email Mary-Jo Sawyer, Registered Dietician at [msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu](mailto:msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu). For class information and registration, call Joy Peterson at 804-560-8955

### Family Life Education

Classes include Maternity Tour/Healthy Beginnings, Breastfeeding Class, Car Seat Safety, Childbirth Preparation, Infant CPR, Newborn Parenting, and Sibling Class. All classes except for the Sibling Class are for adults only. To register or for more information, **call 828-4409**

### Centering Pregnancy Program: A Model for Prenatal Care

Centering Pregnancy groups are made up of 10 to 12 women who will all deliver babies around the same time. The groups include discussion about pregnancy and how to care for the new baby, and in each session, moms will have some private time with a midwife, nurse, or doctor. Groups are available at the Stony Point Women’s Health Center. Contact Ellen Coffin at **628-3042** for more information.

## WOMEN’S HEALTH CLINICAL TRIALS & STUDIES AT VCU

*Clinical trials offer individuals the opportunity to participate in research studies that are used to answer specific questions about the safety and efficacy of new medications, new therapies, or new ways of using known treatments. Individuals participate in clinical trials in order to play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research in women’s health.*

## **Participants Recruited for Study on Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder**

The Virginia Commonwealth University Mood Disorders Institute is recruiting participants for a national study of a new treatment method for premenstrual dysphoric disorder, a severe and debilitating form of premenstrual syndrome, or PMS. Premenstrual dysphoric disorder, or PMDD, affects between 3 percent and 8 percent of women. Many women with PMDD experience mood swings, depression, irritability, anxiety and feelings that life is not worth living, with 15 percent attempting suicide. These symptoms, which occur only premenstrually, are often accompanied by changes in sleep and appetite, changes in energy, breast pain, and bloating — all of which can be severe and lead to disturbances in functioning at home or at work.

The principal investigator, Susan G. Kornstein, M.D., a professor of psychiatry, and obstetrics and gynecology at VCU, said subjects will take the antidepressant sertraline for six months at the onset of symptoms, or will receive a placebo. The goal is to enroll 300 women among three sites — at Cornell, Yale and Virginia Commonwealth universities. The study is supported by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health. For more information, please call the VCU Mood Disorders Institute at 804-828-5639, email [mdi@vcu.edu](mailto:mdi@vcu.edu) or visit: <http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=2362>

## **Anxiety Disorder Study Needs Participants**

*Do you suffer from anxiety and excessive worry?*

*Do you often worry about everyday events?*

*Do you feel fatigued, irritable, and unable to relax or concentrate?*

*Are you experiencing muscle tension and disturbed sleep?*

*Does your anxiety and worry interfere with everyday tasks?*

Dr. Susan Kornstein is conducting a research study of an investigational drug for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. If you are between the ages of 18-65 and medically stable, you may be eligible to participate. Research care is provided to qualified participants at no charge at our convenient off-campus facility. For more information, please call the VCU Mood Disorders Institute at (804) 828-5639.

## **Newly Diagnosed Cancer Patients Wanted to Participate in Survey Study**

This study is designed to find out patients' information needs during cancer treatment. Participants complete 3 survey sessions over 9 months. Survey sessions take place at the Massey Cancer Center, Stony Point or by telephone. Participants can receive up to a total of \$75.00 for participating. For information on this study, call Gerry Meeks, MSW at (804) 628-2622 for more details.

## **"Sneakers & Genes" FOR DAUGHTERS**

If you are a woman 18 - 35 years old and your mother has had breast cancer, please join us for three evening discussions on issues related to wellness at beautiful Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden!

May 5<sup>th</sup> Nutrition and exercise for wellness- What's myth and what's fact?

May 12<sup>th</sup> Understanding family breast cancer risk

May 19<sup>th</sup> Breast cancer screening-What you need to know

Sessions are free, interactive, and last about 1½ hours beginning at 6:30 p.m. For more information or to register contact: Debra Nilson, Program Health Educator, at (804) 828-1561 or e-mail [nilsonde@vcu.edu](mailto:nilsonde@vcu.edu). For directions go to [www.lewisginter.org](http://www.lewisginter.org).

## ABOUT US

The **VCU Institute for Women's Health** was established in 1999 to promote standards of excellence in women's health care, advance cutting edge research, foster community outreach and collaboration, enhance women's leadership, and provide training and education toward the goal of improving the health of women. The Institute is one of 20 National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health, serving as models in providing innovative, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and integrated health care systems for women across the lifespan. For more information on the VCU Institute for Women's Health, please call (804) 827-1200 or [www.womenshealth.vcu.edu](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu)

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**Charlotte K. Roberts Women's Health Resource Center** (WHRC) provides quality information on health and wellness including prevention, conditions, diseases, and treatments. Information and services are available to anyone at no cost. We are located next to Women's Health Center at Stony Point. A Community Health Information Specialist is available from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more info, contact Elaine Minor, Community Health Information Specialist Phone: 804-327-8857; Email: [whrc@vcu.edu](mailto:whrc@vcu.edu)  
[http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/community/resource\\_center.html](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/community/resource_center.html)

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