The Women's Health Research Institute: Mission Overview with Featured Research Projects

By Ruth Shaber, MD

Clinicians should participate in research. This participation in research is essential for validating and promoting innovative, evidence-based practice, and for improving the quality of care we deliver to our members. The Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI)[1] was created in March 2001 to help Kaiser Permanente (KP) physicians and nurse practitioners to conduct clinical research related to women's health.

Historically at The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG), most clinicians who wanted to conduct research had to do so on their own time, without any training or administrative support. In addition, the projects selected by these clinician-researchers did not necessarily fit with the strategic goals of the medical group. Many opportunities for interfacility collaboration were not being realized.

The WHRI effectively acts as a broker between clinician-researchers and sponsors and coordinates studies involving more than one KP site or studies with other academic centers. WHRI projects have been funded by federal and KP grants as well as by grants from pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Some WHRI projects are traditional, multicentered clinical trials; others are investigator-initiated research projects.

The WHRI team provides strategic oversight to ensure that projects are consistent with KP's strategic, operational, and quality goals. We assist WHRI investigators

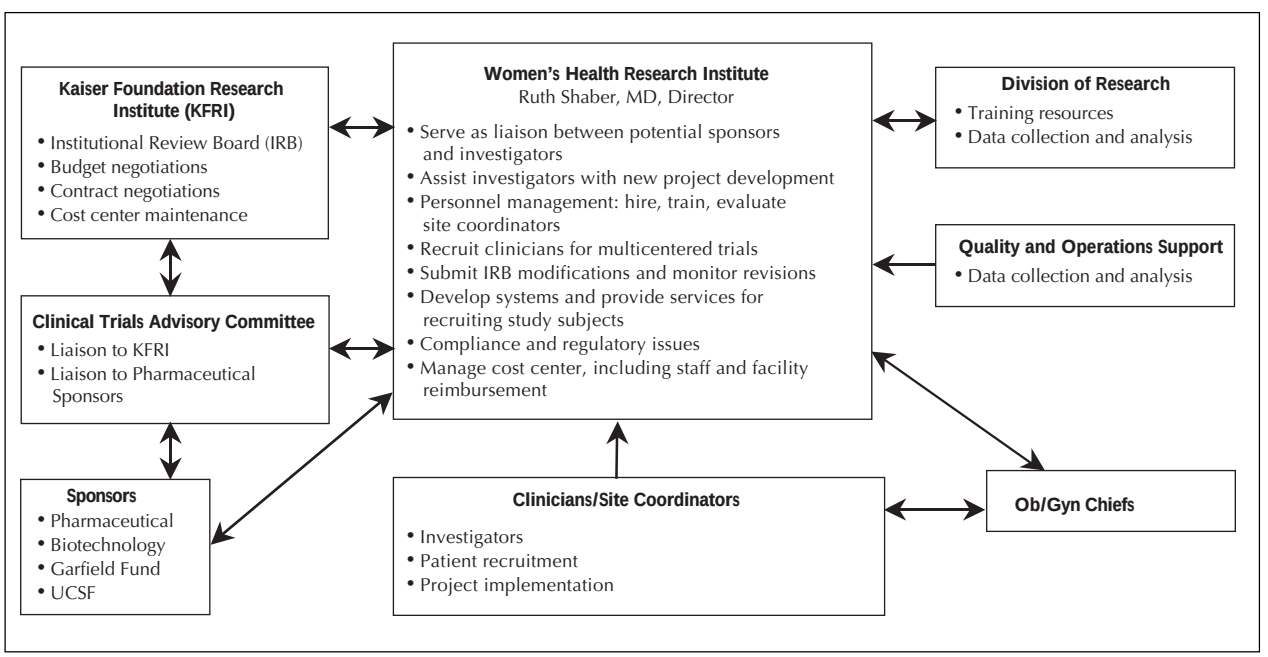

Figure 1. Chart shows relationships between the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) and other research institutions or sponsors in Northern California.

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with administrative and operational support and training when necessary. We also provide compliance and regulatory oversight for new investigators who may not be familiar with US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements and internal KP requirements for clinical research.

To date, we have supported research by more than 20 KP clinicians in Northern California (Table 1) and have attracted more than $1.7 million in research funding. Figure 1 depicts the relationship between WHRI and other research bodies in Northern California.

This section on Research in this issue of *The Permanente Journal* features articles by three of our clinician investigators: Tracy Flanagan, MD; Maggie Che, MD; and Debbie Postlethwaite, NP. ❖

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Reference

1. Women's Health Research Institute [Web site on the Intranet] [cited 2004 Oct 22]. Available from: http://kpnet.kp.org/california/womenshealth/research/.

Table 1. Current research projects supported or coordinated by WHRI

Project title	Investigator	KP facility
Intrauterine contraception: Study to evaluate provider practice and increase utilization	Debbie Postlethwaite, NP Ruth Shaber, MD Victoria Mancuso, MD	South San Francisco South San Francisco Martinez
Evaluation of a Menopause Counseling/Education Intervention	Tracy Flanagan, MD	Richmond
Improving Osteoporosis Screening and Treatment Among Patients with Fragile Fractures	Maggie Che, MD	Vacaville
Relationship of Domestic Violence and Childhood Trauma History to Self-Reported Health Status	Brigid McCaw, MD Jerry Minkoff, MD	Richmond Santa Rosa
Study to Evaluate Self-Reporting of Unintended Pregnancy Among KP Members in Northern California	Debbie Postlethwaite, NP Ruth Shaber, MD Maryanne Armstrong, MA	South San Francisco South San Francisco Division of Research
Feasibility Assessment Preparatory to Research: Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) in Women—Pilot Intervention Study	Debbie Postlethwaite, NP Eleanor Levin, MD Reena Bhargava, MD	South San Francisco Santa Clara Santa Clara
The Natural History of CIN-II (Cervical Intra-epithelial Neoplasia II) in Adolescents	Charles Wibblesman, MD Ruth Shaber, MD	San Francisco South San Francisco
An Evaluation of the Surgical Management of Uterine Fibroids	Ruth Shaber, MD Gavin Jacobson, MD Maryanne Armstrong, MA	South San Francisco South San Francisco Division of Research
A Multicenter, Prospective Evaluation of the Adiana System for Transcervical Sterilization (ATSS) Using Electrothermal Energy in Women Aged 18-45 (Clinical Trial)	Joe Zimmerman, MD Mark Glasser, MD	Roseville San Rafael
A Phase III, 12-Month, Randomized, Double-Blind Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of Two Doses of J867 versus Placebo in Subjects with Uterine Leiomyomata (Clinical Trial)	Ruth Shaber, MD Seth Feigenbaum, MD Michael Nwynn, MD Victoria Mancuso, MD Kimberly Probst, MD	South San Francisco San Francisco Redwood City Martinez Pleasanton
US Clinical Study: Neoventa Medical STAN© S21 Fetal Heart Monitor (Clinical Trial)	Jeffrey Maier, MD Mary Klemm, DO Kenneth Grullon, MD Cori Pachtman, MD Victoria Mancuso, MD Joanne Gras, DO	Walnut Creek Antioch Antioch Antioch Martinez Martinez
A Randomized, Multicenter, Double-Blind, Double-Dummy Study to Evaluate the Safety and Tolerability of Intravenous Zolendromic Acid Compared to Oral Alendronate in Postmenopausal Women with Moderate/Severe Osteopenia or Osteoporosis Already Treated with Alendronate Clinical Trial	Jerry Minkoff, MD Chienying Liu, MD Seth Feigenbaum, MD	Santa Rosa Santa Rosa San Francisco