

Research Review Committee Annual Report 2020



northern health
the northern way of caring

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Introduction and Background

All research conducted within or for Northern Health (NH) must be reviewed and approved by the NH Research Review Committee (RRC).

The RRC is mandated by NH policy to approve, reject, propose modifications to or terminate any proposed or ongoing research involving humans that is conducted: in NH facilities/programs; by NH staff or physicians; or with NH staff, physicians and/or patients. The RRC ensures that ethical principles and standards respecting the personal welfare and rights of research participants have been recognized and accommodated.

The Committee follows NH Research Policy and Principles, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS-2).

The RRC is accountable to the Governance and Management Relations Committee of the NH Board of Directors.

2020 Membership

- Farzana Amin, Clinical Outcomes Analyst, Research, Evaluation and Analytics, NH
- Linda Axen, Regional Manager, Policies and Clinical Practice Standards, NH
- Jennifer Begg, Executive Lead, Child & Youth Health Program, NH
- Julia Bickford, Regional Director, Research, Evaluation and Analytics, NH
- Marcelo Bravo, Coordinator Research and Knowledge Translation, NH
- Tamara Checkley, Lead, Research, Evaluation and Analytics, NH (Chair)
- Damen DeLeenheer, Clinical Educator, NI Rural Communities, Mental Health & Addictions, NH
- Vash Ebbadi-Cook, Interim Regional Director, Quality and Innovation, NH
- Tanis Hampe, Interim Vice President, Pandemic Response, NH
- Roseann Larstone, Lead, Research & Community Engagement, Aboriginal Services, NH
- Kerensa Medhurst, Project Manager, OD Prevention and Response, NH
- Sam Milligan, Integrated Care Coordinator, Carrier-Sekani Family Services
- Robert Pammatt, Research and Development Pharmacist – Primary Care, NH/UBC
- Kirsten Thomson, Regional Director, Risk and Compliance, NH
- Vanessa Salmons, Executive Lead, Perinatal Program, NH

Ad hoc member: Traci de Pape, Regional Manager, Privacy Office is included in the review process when Section 35 of FIPPA applies to a research application or consulted on other relevant privacy concerns or legislation.

Committee Chair: Tamara Checkley, Lead, Research, Evaluation and Analytics, NH

Administrative support: Diana Tecson, Administrative Assistant, Research, Evaluation and Analytics

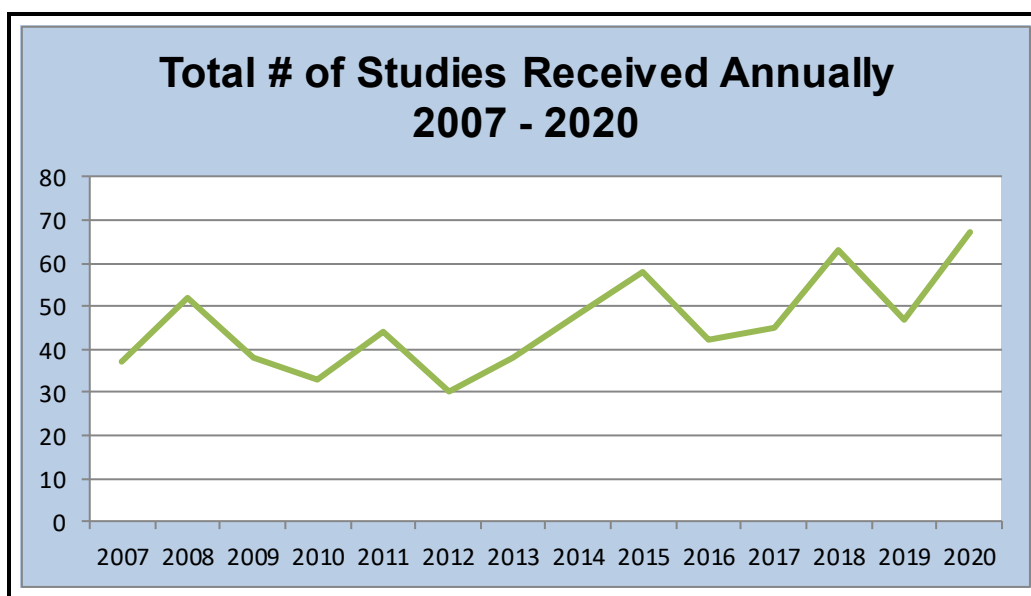
Outgoing Members:

Northern Health would like to thank Dr. Jong Kim for his contribution and service to the RRC.

Research Reviewed

Sixty-Seven (67) studies were received by the Research Review Committee in 2020. Two (2) were subsequently withdrawn by the researchers because the study was placed on hold, decided not to proceed at NH sites, or determined to be outside of NH RRC jurisdiction (e.g., research conducted in a private family practice office).

There was a considerable increase in research studies received after a noted decline in 2019. More applications were received in 2020 than any other year in for the RRC.



In 2020, 96% of the studies reviewed by NH were completed through the Research Ethics BC harmonized review process with BC University and Health Authority partners. There continues to be a small proportion of studies occurring with intuitions in BC that are not part of the BC ethics harmonization partnership, are outside of BC and within Canada or are outside of Canada.

Status of applications received in 2020 (as of February 17, 2020):

- 52 – Approved
- 30 – Ethics approval granted, operational approval required
- 13 – Provisos pending (e.g., initial review complete, clarifications/revisions required by researcher before Research Ethics Board/Committee approval)
- 2 – Withdrawn/on hold/determined to be outside NH jurisdiction

Northern Health Participation in BC Harmonized Reviews

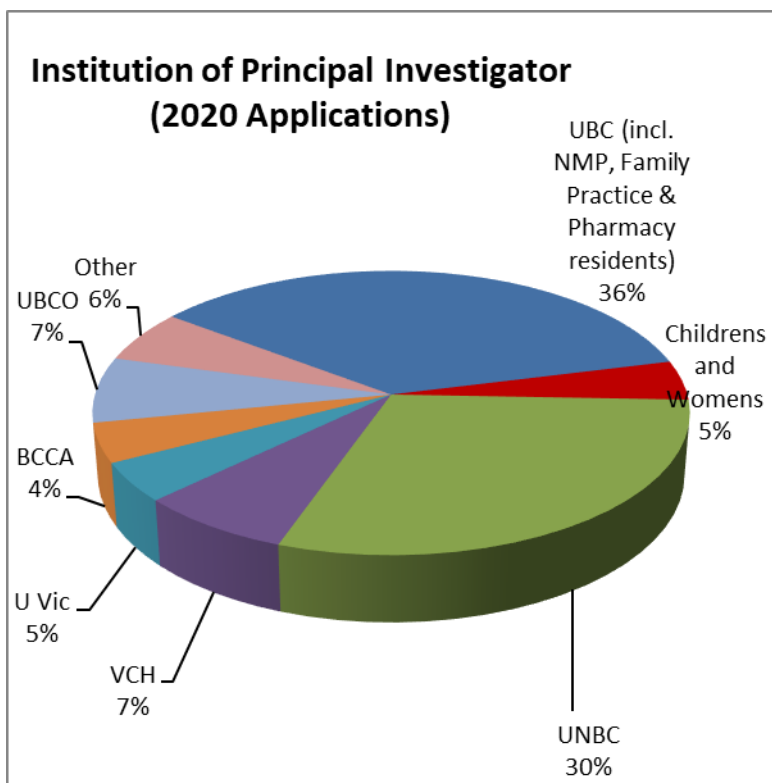
2015:	24 (41% of total studies)
2016:	35 (83%)
2017:	38 (84%)
2018:	52 (95%)
2019:	41 (87%)
2020:	64 (96%)

[Table A](#) contains a list of the 2020 research applications that has received both ethics approval by the RRC and operational approval.

[Table B](#) contains a list of the 2020 research applications that has received ethics approval by the RRC but operational approval is required.

Principal Investigators

As in previous years, the majority of applications to the NH RRC were received from University of British Columbia (UBC) (36%) and University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) Principal Investigators (PI) (30%). Research done by Northern Medical Program faculty and students or UBC clinical residency programs based in the north are included with the UBC PI total.



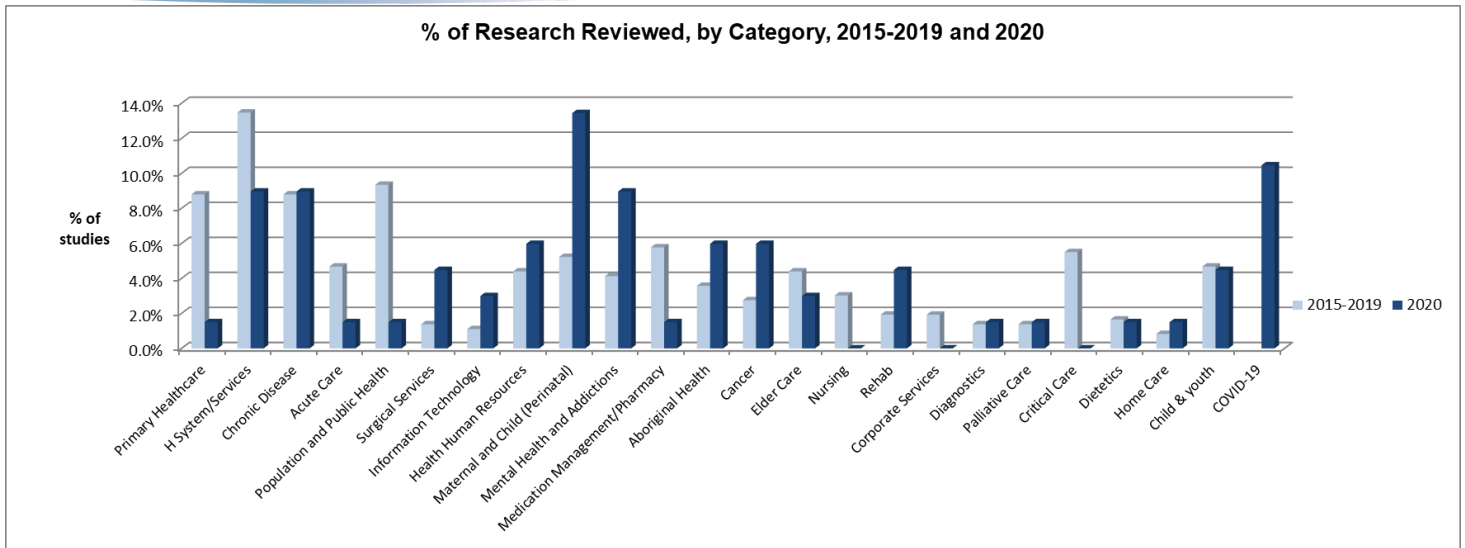
Thirty (30%) of 2020 applications involved a **UNBC PI or Co-Investigator** (compared with 19% in 2019, 47% in 2018, 23% in 2017, 33% in 2016 and 26% in 2015).

Category of Research

Northern Health categories

Starting in 2010, researchers were invited to select the most suitable categories for their study. Researchers identified up to three categories per study. The percentage of studies that were classified into each category in 2015-2019 and in 2020 are shown in the graph below. A new category was added in 2020, COVID-19, to reflect the shifting research priorities.

Key topic areas shifted in 2020 away from focus on health systems to maternal/child, chronic diseases and COVID-19.

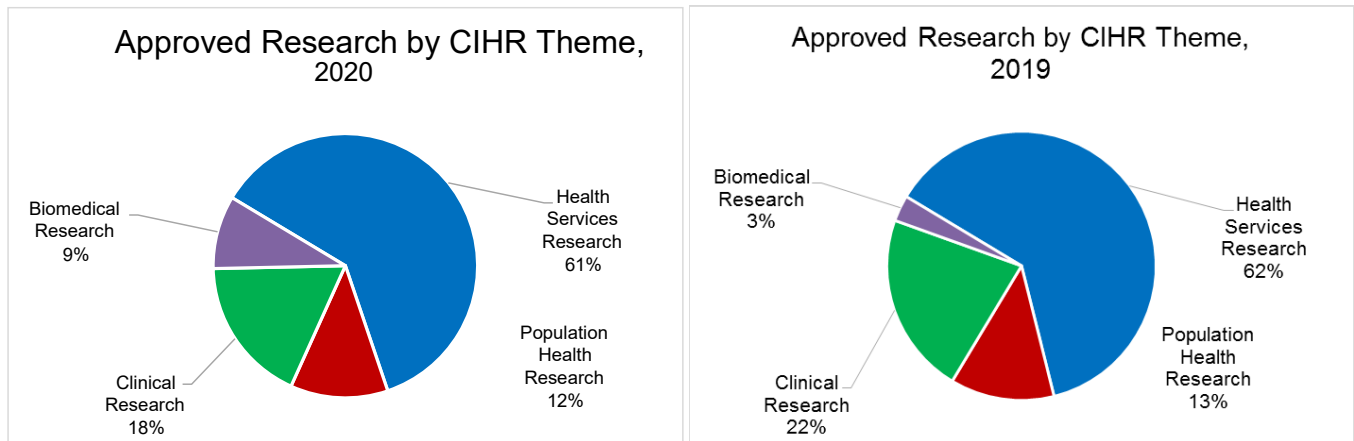


COVID Related Studies

To support expedited reviews of COVID related studies, Research Ethics BC facilitated developing and implementing rapid turn-around for COVID studies. In 2020, NH received 11 COVID related studies. These are inclusive of both COVID focused research and research amended to include COVID related lines of inquiry.

Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) categories

The CIHR categorizes research into four ‘themes’. Definitions of the four themes of health research can be found in [Table A](#).



2020 Administrative Activity and Developments

Due to COVID-19 related activities, the committee was only able to meet four times in 2020. Delegated reviews¹ were carried out in months when the Committee did not meet.

¹ A delegated review involves the assignment of one or two reviewers from the Committee to complete the review and approval process for a study

Conclusion

Health research in northern BC experienced a rise in 2020. The 67 applications received covered a range of topics with the most prominent being health systems and services, maternal and child, chronic diseases and COVID-19. Over half of the studies were led by researchers affiliated with UBC. Due to COVID-19 there was also a noted decline in the number of studies conducted by students or clinical residents.

With the establishment and full implementation of the research ethics harmonization initiative in BC, 95% of all studies are now completed through the harmonization review process. Collaborative reviews with partner institutions have supported ongoing growth and skill in committee members' ethical review of studies.

Research is an important contributor to the high quality services in Northern Health. In 2021, we will continue to focus on process related improvements to support efficient and meaningful support of research ethics and operational approval in NH.



Table A: 2020 Research Projects, Ethics and Northern Health Approved to December 31, 2020

Including Canadian Institute for Health Research Themes (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48801.html>)

Theme 1: Biomedical Research (B)

Biomedical research is research with the goal of understanding normal and abnormal human functioning, at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels, including development of tools and techniques to be applied for this purpose; developing new therapies or devices that improve health or the quality of life of individuals, up to the point where they are tested on human subjects. Biomedical research may also include studies on human subjects that do not have a diagnostic or therapeutic orientation.

Theme 2: Clinical Research (C)

Clinical research is research with the goal of improving the diagnosis, and treatment (including rehabilitation and palliation), of disease and injury; improving the health and quality of life of individuals as they pass through normal life stages. Clinical research usually encompasses research on, or for the treatment of, patients.

Theme 3: Health Services Research (H)

Health services research includes research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviors affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and, ultimately, Canadians' health and well-being.

Theme 4: Social, Cultural, Environmental, and Population Health Research (P)

Population and public health research comprises research with the goal of improving the health of the Canadian population, or of defined sub-populations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational and economic factors determine health status.

Title of Research	Principal Investigator	PI Institution	Northern Health Operational Approval	CIHR Theme
Received and Approved by Research Review Committee				
The Rural Social Intimacy Study	Martha Macleod	UNBC	Ciro Panessa, Northwest Chief Operating Officer	H
Embedding health care technologies in real-world contexts: developing the scale-up, spread, and sustainability of assistive technologies in homes, communities, and health systems.	Karen Kobayashi	UVIC	Aaron Bond, Executive Lead, Elder Program	H

Perceptions of Independent Prescribing of Health Authority and Community Pharmacists in Northern British Columbia	Robert Pammett	UBC	Katie Bellefeuille, Residency Coordinator, Pharmacy	H
Virtual Maternity Care Needs	Jude Kornelsen	UBC	Vanessa Salmons, Executive Lead, Perinatal Program, Clinical Programs	H
Tailor RT: A Randomized Trial of Regional Radiotherapy in Biomarker Low Risk Node Positive Breast Cancer	Timothy Whelan	BCCA	Sherri Tillotson, Director Regional Tertiary Services / UHNBC Clinical Support	C
BC PEWS ED - Health Admin Data	Theresa McElroy	Childrens and Womens	Melanie Moffatt, Regional Coding Coordinator / Health Record Administrator	H C
Usability Testing of Technology to Support Older Adults in Northern and Rural Communities	Shannon Freeman	UNBC	Aaron Bond, Executive Lead, Elder Program	C
Understanding engagement in care by patients who access opioid agonist therapy	Erin Wilson	UNBC	Helen Bourque, Lead, Nurse Practitioners / Regional Director, Nurse Practitioner	H
The Northern Pediatric Wellness (NPW) Survey	Kathryn Leccese	UNBC	Jennifer Begg, Executive Lead, Child & Youth Health Programs	P
Understanding the Experience of Rural Maternity Care Providers During the COVID-19 Response in British Columbia	Trina Fyfe	UNBC	Dr. M. Odulio, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology	C
			Kara Hunter, Regional Director, Nurse Practitioner	
The Impact of Structures and Systems present in Everyday Home Care Nursing Work on the Nurse-Patient Relationship in Northern British Columbia	Erin Wilson	UNBC	Julie Dhaliwal, Director, Community Services	H
Studying consensus methods in integrated knowledge translation to promote patient-oriented research	Nelly D. Oelke	UBCO	Fraser Bell, Vice President, Planning Quality & Information Management	H
			Laura Wessman, Former Health Services Administrator	
COPD Alert! Metro Telehealth Study	Pat Camp	UBC	Idowu Koledoye, Chief Physiotherapist	C

Taking health into our own hands: leveraging community strengths and technology through self-screening to improve the health of Métis women living in Northwestern BC	Gina Ogilvie	BCCA	Sandra Stanley, Primary Care Nurse Lead	H
A Hermeneutic Perspective on Implementing Virtual Kidney Care in Northern BC	Martha Macleod	UNBC	Dr. Anurag Singh, Physician, Internal Medicine	H
District of Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Study	Marleen Morris	UNBC	Angela De Smit, Northeast Chief Operating Officer	H
Risk mitigation and peer support for people who use substances during dual public health emergencies	Bernie Pauly	UVIC	Michelle Lawrence, Executive Lead, Mental Health & Substance Use Program	H
Developing an interprofessional health sector research team to advance physical activity in northern BC	Chelsea Pelletier	UNBC	Sabrina Dosanjh-Gantner, Regional Manager, Healthy Living & Chronic Disease Prevention	P
The Comparative Impact of Job Satisfaction, Overtime and Organization Psychological Protection	Leanne O'Neill	UOL	Daryl Petsul, Health Services Administrator	H
			Cheryl Elliott, Clinical Practice Lead, Nurse Manager	
Renewal and expansion of the rural birth index (RBI) in BC	Jude Kornelsen	UBC	John Short, Site Administrator	H
			Kerry Laidlaw, Site Administrator	
			Vicky Rensby, Health Services Administrator	
			James Simpson, Health Services Administrator	
A quality improvement study to improve crystalloid resuscitation in the management of shock in the emergency and critical care departments at the University Hospital of Northern BC	Christian Turner	UBC	Dr. Patrick Rowe, Department Head, Emergency, UHNBC	C
			Dr. Alasair Nazerali-Maitland, Acting Director, Critical Care Medicine, UHNBC	
			Susan Miller, Pharmacy Manager, UHNBC	

UBC Family Practice Resident Research Project: Understanding the demand for immediate postplacental intrauterine devices (IPPI) and quantifying the uptake following staff training	Sheona Mitchell-Foster	UNBC	Teresa Ward, Health Information Management Coordinator	C
IMPACT-AD BC	Mari DeMarco	UBC	Chantelle Wilson, Manager, Child & Youth Regional & Specialized Services	C

Table B: 2020 Research Projects, Ethics Approved, requiring Northern Health Operational Approval to December 31, 2020

More studies ended 2020 without securing operational approval than in previous years. Due to COVID-19, many studies were required to change methods to comply with COVID policies, while others have been unable to move forward due to excessive operational impacts on resource stretched areas. Researchers who did not engage with leadership early on in their research have experienced more challenges gaining approval.

Title of Research	Principal Investigator	PI Institution
Harm Reduction in BC Emergency Departments	Victoria Bungay	UBC
Rural Surgical and Obstetrical Networks Outcomes Evaluation (RSON Admin Data)	Jude Kornelsen	UBC
Clinical and Pathologic Correlates of Prognosis and Treatment of Neuroendocrine Tumors	Michael Loree	BCCA
Vanderhoof Opioid ED Review	Eric Butler	UBC
HPV Vaccination and First Nations People Living in BC	Gina Ogilvie	UBC
BC PEWS ED Implementation Study	Theresa McElroy	Childrens and Womens
Rural Surgical and Obstetrical Networks - Remote Presence Technology Needs Assessment	Jude Kornelsen	UBC
PLURAL - Priorities for Rural Health	Mark Harrison	UBC
Making It Work: Supporting Indigenous Community Approaches to Integrated Service Models for People Living with HIV, Hepatitis C, Ill Mental Health, and/or Problematic Substance Use	Nancy Clark	UVIC

A Randomized Open-Label Trial of CONvalescent Plasma for Hospitalized Adults With Acute COVID-19 Respiratory Illness (CONCOR-1)	Andrew Shih	VCH
Do Relaxation Techniques Improve Recovery in Recently Concussed Individuals?: The Relax-Concussion Pilot Study	Jacqueline Pettersen	UNBC
Cultural Agility in Northern BC's Healthcare System: Increasing Indigenous Employment Participation and Responsiveness to Indigenous Well-Being	Sarah de Leeuw	UNBC
Exploring the feasibility of implementing an informed consent process for Rh immune globulin (Rhlg) in northern British Columbia	Trina Fyfe	UNBC
Learning in a Time of Crisis: Creating a Canadian Emergency Department COVID-19 Registry	Corrine Hohl	UBC
UBC COVID Biobank - A Collection of Samples and Data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic for Research	David Schaeffer	VCH
Factors Influencing Physician Retention in Northern BC/Rural Practice	Dana Thomsen	UBC
Working Collaboratively in the Drug Addiction Care in Rural British Columbia; a Community Care Model Development.	Onuora Odoh	UBC
Rehabilitation Service Capacity for COVID19 Survivors	Pat Camp	Providence Health
Community based self-collected HPV testing in three FNHA communities	Gina Ogilvie	UBC
Exploring childrens independent mobility in Northern BC	Chelsea Pelletier	UNBC
Mobile Uninterruptable power supply (UPS) system for ventilators	Jian Liu	UBC
An Evaluation of the COPD Program in Fort St James	Shannon Freeman	UNBC

Quality-of-Life Measures for Rural Surgical and Obstetrical Nurses in British Columbia	Jude Kornelsen	UBC
Assessment of practitioner needs for providing virtual maternity care in rural and remote communities in British Columbia	Jude Kornelsen	UBC
Strategies to Relieve Suffering at End-of-Life (STRS-EOL)	Barbara Pesut	UBCO
Access to Family Planning Services in northern British Columbia	Wendy Norman	UNBC
UBC Family Practice Resident Research Project :Rh disease in Northern Health Newborns, A quality Improvement Audit	Trina Fyfe	UNBC
Mobilizing early management of mental health complications after mild traumatic brain injury (M4)	Noah Silverberg	UBC
Canadian Treatments for COVID19 (CATCO)	Srinivas Murthy	Childrens and Womens
EQUIP Emergency Research Phase II (Surveys)	Colleen Varcoe	UBC
Rh-Disease Awareness and Prevention (RhAP): Knowledge Assessment and Patient-led Advocacy Group Formation	Trina Fyfe	UNBC
CORVIX Study: A Spatial Approach to Exploring Vulnerability in the Context of COVID-19 in British Columbia	Valorie Crooks	SFU
Validation of the Personality Assessment Inventory - Short Form for Patients with Psychiatric Diagnoses	Harry Miller	UBCO
UBC Family Practice Resident Research Project: The Impact of Sociodemographics on Accessing Prenatal Care in Northern British Columbia, A Case Control Study	Eric Butler	UBC
The RESPCCT Study (Research Examining Stories of Pregnancy and Childbearing in Canada Today)	Saraswathi Vedam	UBC

Stroke Telerehabilitation in Rural British Columbia: Exploring the Perceptions of Stroke Survivors, Caregivers, Clinicians, and Health Administrators	Brodie Sakakibara	UBCO
A study of patients' perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on the care and support for British Columbians living with asthma and COPD	Christopher Carlsten	UBC
The BC Glomerulonephritis Registry: the justification for a provincial registry of patients with glomerulonephritis.	Sean Jacob Barbour	VCH
Implementation of a Multi-institutional Preoperative Optimization Quality Improvement Initiative	Tom Wallace	IH
Improving Care Coordination for Patients Newly Diagnosed with Cancer in Northern British Columbia: A Feasibility Study	Erin Wilson	UNBC
Understanding the factors influencing physical activity behaviour in rural communities	Chelsea Pelletier	UNBC
Building Resilient Rural Communities: Understanding the Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change Events and COVID-19	Nelly D. Oelke	UBCO