



Presented by



**Together we can beat inequities
in women's heart and brain health.**

Saturday, April 18, 2026 | Fairmont Pacific Rim

Research Networks of Excellence in Women's Heart and/or Brain Health

In 2024 Heart & Stroke partnered with Brain Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Gender and Health to launch two Networks of Research Excellence in Women's Heart and/or Brain Health, the first of their kind in Canada. These collaborations bring together top researchers, clinicians and community voices to confront priorities in women's heart and brain health that have historically been under-researched. The competition for a third network of excellence, to focus on rehabilitation and recovery for women following acute heart-brain events such as stroke, heart attack or cardiac arrest, has recently launched and will be awarded in the fall of 2026.

To ensure every Network receives \$5 million in funding over five years, we are actively fundraising right now, including at the Heart & Stroke Gala presented by BC Lions. The first two Networks of Excellence in Women's Heart and/or Brain Health are already paving the way for life-saving discoveries. Your support will help us keep the momentum going.

Reducing deaths and serious illness from heart conditions during and between pregnancies



The Canadian Network of Networks to Reduce Cardiovascular Mortality and Morbidity in Pregnancy CaNCaM-Preg

Led by: **Dr. Rohan D'Souza (ON)**
Research area: Risk factors

"In addition to reducing deaths and serious illness, through the established networks we will be able to conduct high-quality research to improve the health of pregnant persons and babies for years to come."

- Dr. D'Souza

The period during and immediately after pregnancy is a particularly high-risk time for a woman's cardiovascular health. In fact, heart-related conditions are leading causes of death and serious illness among pregnant individuals, particularly affecting Indigenous and ethnic minority populations.

CaNCaM-Preg has established a large network of clinicians, researchers, social scientists, economists and women with lived experience from across Canada to work together towards reducing heart-related deaths and serious illness during and after pregnancy. This involves in-depth reviews of all serious pregnancy-related cardiovascular events in Canada; assessing pregnant people with heart conditions after their pregnancies to ensure that they recover fully, so that they have fewer complications later in life; and ensuring pregnant people with heart valve disease receive specialized care when needed, to improve outcomes for them and their babies.

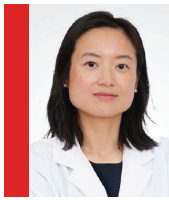
The British Columbia Connection

BC researchers and health professionals that are playing key roles in the CaNCaM-Preg network, include: Dr. Jasmine Grewal, one of four principal applicants of CaNCaM-Preg and Head - Division of Cardiology, UBC; Brittany Bingham, Director of Indigenous Services, Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity, UBC; Saraswathi Vedam, Professor of Midwifery, UBC; AJ Lowik, Researcher, Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity, UBC.



heartandstrokegala.ca

Improving stroke care, treatment and recovery for women



Stroke in Women: Growing Opportunities to Realize Optimal Evaluation, Diagnosis and Outcomes StrokeGoRed

Led by: **Dr. Amy Yu (ON)**

Research area: Diagnosis and treatment

"We will work together to advance knowledge on how and why stroke affects women and men differently. Our studies will lead to new discoveries on how to individualize stroke care and treatments to improve outcomes in women."

- Dr. Yu

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability in Canada, and women experience worse outcomes than men—yet the reasons remain poorly understood.

StrokeGoRed is the first formal research network in Canada dedicated to studying stroke in women. It brings together a diverse group of champions for women's brain health, including clinicians, researchers, an Ininiw scholar, people with lived experience, engineers, computer scientists, data scientists, statisticians, knowledge mobilization experts, educators, decision makers, and knowledge users. The team will work together to advance knowledge on how and why stroke affects women and men differently and will provide training and mentorship to the next generation of researchers and clinicians working with patients who had a stroke. StrokeGoRed studies hope to lead to new discoveries on how to individualize stroke care and treatments to improve outcomes in women.

The British Columbia Connection

BC researchers and stroke specialists are playing key roles in the StrokeGoRed network, including: Dr. Lily Zhou, Assistant Professor, UBC; Dr. Linda Li, Professor, UBC; Dr. Alexander Tkach, Associate Professor, Kelowna General Hospital; Dr. Diana J. Kim, Assistant Professor, UBC; Dr. Brodie Sakakibara, Assistant Professor, UBC; Dr. Courtney Pollock, Assistant Professor, UBC; Dr. Jason Sutherland, Professor, UBC; Sacha Arseneault, Provincial Director, Stroke Services BC.

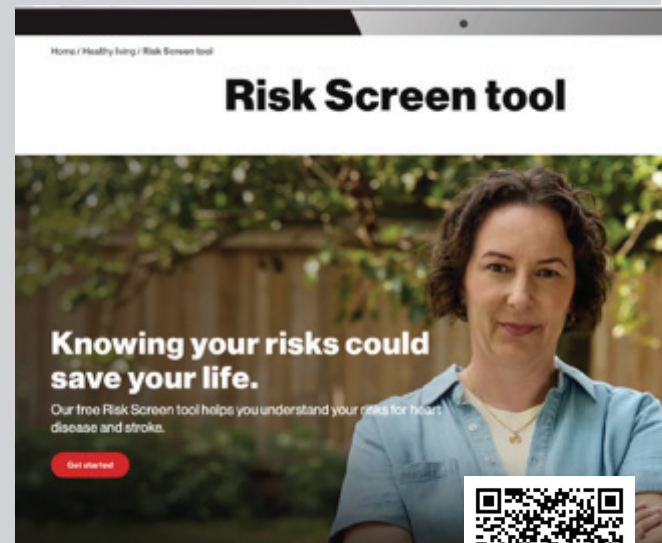
Funding the next generation of researchers

In addition to the networks of excellence, Heart & Stroke, along with our partner Brain Canada, is committed to providing \$5 million over five years to support Doctoral and Postdoctoral Personnel Awards for Women's Heart and/or Brain Health. The Personnel Awards aim to increase the pool of researchers and clinician-scientists in Canada devoted to women's heart and brain health research. Over the next five years, we will jumpstart the careers of over 100 early-career investigators, sparking life-long dedication to women's heart and brain health research.

Turning awareness into action

Too many people don't know their own risk factors, and for women, the challenge is even greater. Their risks change across life stages and are often different from men's, yet those differences have long been overlooked. According to a recent Heart & Stroke poll, only half of Canadians are aware of their risk factors for heart disease and stroke, and women as less aware than men.

That's why Heart & Stroke is investing \$5 million to raise awareness about risk factors, including the launch of **Risk Screen**. This new online tool is designed to help people identify, reduce and manage their risk factors for heart disease and stroke by putting practical, personalized insights directly into the hands of people across Canada. It is designed to give people easy-to-understand recommendations and connect them to resources that fit their stage of life. With an emphasis on women's health, the tool highlights risk factors that uniquely affect women, such as pregnancy complications, hormonal changes and more.



Scan the code to start your **Risk Screen** journey now.

