

The individuals listed below have indicated they are willing to supervise a summer student, however, any Women's Health Program member is eligible to serve as a supervisor. See https://www.uhn.ca/Medicine/Womens_Health_Program/our_members for a full list of members.

2025 List of Supervisors

UHN Women's Health Program

Esther Bui, MD, FRCPC

Dr. Bui is a neurologist with an expertise in epilepsy and electroencephalography (EEG). Her research interests are in women's health in neurology and medical education.

As a key founding member of the Women's Neurology Program (est. 2015) at the University of Toronto, her work includes: Co-director of the Women's Neurology Program and Fellowship; Co-chair of the Women's Issues in Epilepsy, Canadian League Against Epilepsy; and, Founder of the Women in Neurology mentorship program for residents and fellows, University of Toronto. Her research interests are in women's health issues in epilepsy and neurology, music therapy for women with epilepsy (WWE) during pregnancy, understanding stigma in WWE during their reproductive years, factors affecting outcomes in pregnancy for WWE in Canada, breast milk concentrations for anti-seizure medications, and scoping review of women's issues in neurology.

In Women's Health in Neurology, Dr. Bui is a recognized national expert in Women's Issues in Epilepsy and co-author of the Women with Epilepsy, a Practical Management Handbook. At the national level, she continues to work within the Canadian League Against Epilepsy (CLAE) to advance our understanding of women's issues in epilepsy. She is currently an external expert for the European Association of Neurology: Gender and Diversity Task Force.

In Education and Mentorship, Dr. Bui is the recipient of the New Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award (2016-2017), the William Goldie Award in Education (2020-2021). She has been nominated for the Robert Shepherd Award for Health Equity and Social Justice and the John Edmeads Mentorship Award. Funding for education research has come from the University of Toronto New Initiatives Program, Medical Humanities Education Grant and the Postgraduate Innovation Fund Award.

Jenna Gillen, PhD (she/her)

Dr. Jenna Gillen is an Assistant Professor of Exercise Physiology in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education at the University of Toronto. The overarching goal of Dr. Gillen's research program is to advance understanding of how exercise and nutrition influence whole-body and skeletal muscle substrate metabolism in humans. A primary focus of Dr. Gillen's current research program includes studying the effects of exercise and nutrition interventions on metabolic and health-related outcomes in women across the lifespan, and exploring sex-based differences in the adaptive response. Her research program takes a multidisciplinary approach that leverages advanced molecular and clinical research methods to investigate how exercise and/or dietary interventions influence whole-body metabolism, muscle physiology and human health. Methodologies implemented include: venipuncture, muscle biopsies, exercise testing, continuous

glucose monitoring, indirect calorimetry, stable isotope tracers, wearable technology, and wet lab molecular biology.

Amy Kirkham, PhD

Dr. Amy Kirkham is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Cardiovascular Health in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education at the University of Toronto and an Affiliate Scientist at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. She is also an Associate Member of the Cardiovascular Sciences Collaborative Specialization at the University of Toronto. Dr. Kirkham's research program aims to characterize the intersection of cancer, cardiovascular, and metabolic disease in women and to develop lifestyle interventions including exercise, diet (e.g., intermittent fasting, ketogenic diet), and multi-modal rehabilitation, to prevent or ameliorate underlying cardiometabolic dysfunction. A primary goal in developing effective interventions for women with or at risk for these conditions is consideration of feasibility and potential for implementation, including barriers common among women and minorities. Dr. Kirkham's assessment approach is comprehensive and holistic, encompassing the use of biological samples, real-time biosensors (e.g., continuous glucose monitors, physical activity trackers), validated patient-reported outcomes, cardiopulmonary exercise testing, and state-of-the-art imaging magnetic resonance and ultrasound imaging techniques.

Ana Konvalinka, MD, PhD, FRCPC

Dr. Ana Konvalinka was recruited in 2015, as a transplant nephrologist and a Clinician Scientist at Toronto General Hospital, University Health Network. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. Dr. Konvalinka completed medical studies at the University of Ottawa in 2003. She then completed internal medicine and nephrology training in Toronto in 2008. She subsequently embarked on a PhD in basic science at the University of Toronto. Her PhD thesis addressed the effect of angiotensin II on the proteome of primary human proximal tubular cells, and the relevance of this effect in vivo. Following completion of her PhD in 2013, she went on to complete the clinical kidney transplant fellowship at Toronto General Hospital. Her main clinical and research interests are in antibody-mediated rejection and kidney allograft fibrosis. She utilizes systems biology approaches and proteomics to enhance the understanding of the mechanisms, derive novel markers and to repurpose drugs for treatment of kidney disease. Dr. Konvalinka is the director of the Multi-Organ Transplant biobank for kidney, pancreas and liver transplant programs. She is also the co-director of the Drug Discovery research group. She has received international research awards (the Human Proteome Project (2016), the American Society of Transplantation Faculty-Development Research Grant (2016) and the Advances in Organ Transplantation Award (2015)) and national research awards (Canadian Society of Nephrology New Investigator Lectureship (2017) and the KRESCENT New Investigator Award (2016)).

Sophia (Yue) Li, PhD

Dr. Li is a Staff Scientist and Strategic Partnerships Manager at the KITE Research Institute of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute-University Health Network. She holds a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Montreal - Ecole Polytechnique of Montreal. Dr. Li's research focuses on assistive technologies, the impact of weather and building environment on safety and accessibility, and human factor aspects of fall prevention. Dr. Li has accumulated over twenty years of expertise in rehabilitation and biomedical engineering research and has contributed significantly

to solving practical problems for an ageing population and people who struggle with different forms of disability. Dr. Li is the Co-Chair of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) Slips, Trips and Falls Technical Committee. She is also a member of the following committees: 1) TCMSBEA (Technical Committee for a Model Standard for the Built Environment – Accessibility) of Accessibility Standards Canada; 2) the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standards Committee (Z195 Protective footwear); 3) the ASTM Standards Committee (F13 Pedestrian/Walkway Safety); 4) the Accessibility Advisory Panel Transportation Services of the City of Toronto.

Susan Marzolini, R.Kin, PhD

Dr. Marzolini is a Scientist at KITE, as well as an Exercise Physiologist and Registered Kinesiologist located at Toronto Rehabilitation's Cardiac Rehabilitation program. She is an associate graduate faculty member at the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute at the University of Toronto. The focus of her research is to determine ways to optimize health in males and females with cardiac disease and stroke while also eliminating sex disparities in access to exercise and risk factor modification programs. Using novel exercise training methods her aim is to determine an exercise treatment aimed at promoting long-term health, repairing the brain and restoring lost mobility after stroke. She designed and developed Toronto Rehab/UHN's Exercise and Risk Factor Modification Program for People following Stroke (TRI-REPS) and the resistance training program for cardiac patients which are now core components of the program delivery model.

She was recently recognized as one of the top 10 productive authors globally and 3rd in Canada of cardiac rehabilitation and related research publications over the last 20 years and one of 24 people globally selected as a World Heart Federation Emerging Leader.

Michelle Nadler, MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dr. Michelle Nadler is a newly appointed Assistant Professor, Clinician in Quality and Innovation at the University of Toronto and a staff physician at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, where she works as a breast medical oncologist.

Her research training is in knowledge translation (dissemination & implementation) with a focus on cancer survivorship issues and exercise-oncology in all persons with cancer and particularly women with breast cancer. She is also involved in knowledge translation efforts related to breast cancer screening in women age 40-49.

Dr. Nadler is the co-wellness executive lead for the Division of Medical Oncology & Hematology. In this role she advocates for and works toward both individual-level and organizational-level changes to improve wellness and engagement in all divisional members

Rinat Nissim, Ph.D., C. Psych.

Dr. Nissim is a staff psychologist and the co-director of the Caregiver Clinic at the Department of Supportive Care of the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, and an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and an associate member in the Institute of Medical Science, University

of Toronto. Her research program aligns with her clinical focus on the psychosocial needs of family caregivers of individuals with cancer, utilizing qualitative and mixed-method research approaches.

Aleksandra Pikula, MD PhD FRCPC (Neurologist)

Dr. Aleksandra Pikula is an Associate Professor of Medicine (Neurology) at the University of Toronto, a Clinician-Investigator at Krembil Brain Institute, Director of Stroke Neurology Research at UHN and Co-Director of Women's Neurology Fellowship at U of T.

She is a founder and director of the largest multidisciplinary Stroke in Young Adults (SiYA) Program in Canada that entails three clinics – Combined CNS Vasculitis, Stroke in Young and Stroke in Women. Dr. Pikula completed her clinical training in Internal Medicine at NYU (MSH), Neurology at Boston University School of Medicine, and a three-year combined clinical and research Vascular Neurology fellowship training at the Boston University School of Medicine (BMC), at the Harvard School of Medicine (MGH) and at the Framingham Heart Study where she worked for 5 years prior to joining UHN. She is also board certified in Lifestyle Medicine through American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

Dr. Pikula's overarching clinical and research interests are focused on clinical and subclinical cerebrovascular disease in young population, with special interest in sex-disparities and women's brain health. Over the past decade, a major focus of her research had been in identifying the biological/molecular pathways and imaging markers for overt/covert vascular brain disease in middle-aged population (Framingham). At UHN/KBI, Dr. Pikula's clinical research is focused on sex-disparities in stroke outcomes by utilizing PROMS and studying the effect of various factors (psychological, social, lifestyle) on HRQOL, stroke outcomes and post-stroke needs in young stroke survivors. This led to an emerging interest in developing innovative clinical strategies for primary/secondary stroke prevention in young – The EMBRACE Lifestyle Program. Through this program, Dr. Pikula is now leading the W - KNOW BRAIN CARE Study on patients knowledge about lifestyle & brain health in neurology, with specific focus on age, sex and gender specific disparities. Dr. Pikula co-chairs the U of T Women's Brain Health Rounds with Dr. Gillian Einstein from the U of T, Department of Psychology and through support from the Women's Brain Health Initiative & the Wilfred & Joys Posluns Chair in Women's Brain Health and Aging. The rounds serve as a unique international opportunity for students, faculty, residents and patients to share translational links between clinical and basic science around women's brain health in those with or without neurological conditions. The rounds are further supported by the Frontiers in Global Women's Health through Article Collection to allow students and junior faculty members to share and publish their work around the same topics.

Dr. Pikula's work had been published in high impact journals and recognized by, amongst others, the NIH/NINDS & ANA as a recipient of the Investigator Development Award and the AHA/ASA as a recipient of National Clinical Research Awards, which allowed her to study serum levels and genetic variation of various novel biomarkers in stroke and subclinical vascular brain injury in mid-age population. Since arrival to UHN, she maintains collaborations with Framingham Study and holds research support from the UofT, HSFC, CSC and CIHR for several active studies.

Valeria Rac, MD, PhD

Dr. Valeria E. Rac is a full-time Scientist and Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Lead with the Ted Rogers Center for Heart Research (TRCHR) at Peter Munk Cardiac Centre (PMCC), Toronto General Hospital Research Institute (TGHRI). She is also a Director of Program for Health System and

Technology Evaluation, and an Associate Director of Toronto Health Economics and Technology Assessment (THETA) Collaborative, where she leads the Clinical Research Division. She is an Assistant Professor with the Institute of Health, Policy, Management and Evaluation (IHPME) at Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH), where she teaches Program Planning and Evaluation and Evaluation Design for Complex Interventions. Dr. Rac leads Research Program in HTA and Network Analytics for the national Diabetes Action Canada (DAC) CIHR SPOR Network. She has received over \$18,000,000 CAD in grant funding from various funding sources with over \$3,500,000 CAD as a Principal Applicant.

Her expertise is in the area of the health technology assessment (HTA), and health services research focused on program evaluations and complex interventions in chronic disease management, working closely with patients, community partners and government/policy-makers. Dr. Rac has a very strong interest and a successful track record in conducting research relevant to Women's health. During her MSc/PhD she studied a new tocolytic drug in a translational project. For that work she received the scholarship from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) as well the Ontario Women's Health Scholars Award as one of the first four Ontario scholars that received this award. Her post-doctoral studies were focused on the gender differences in a provision of post-arrest care for which she received the Jump Start Resuscitation Fellowship from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC) as well as operating funding from the HSFC and the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). With the THETA team, Dr. Rac led the study looking into gender differences in utilization of the specialized heart failure clinics as part of our pan-provincial study on heart failure clinics. Under her guidance and mentorship, her trainees have been conducting research relevant to women's health. For example, her postdoctoral fellow Dr. Stanimirovic won the CIHR SPOR DAC Internship Award to study the impact of intersecting systems of oppression on diabetic retinopathy screening among women of lower socioeconomic status.

Nadine Shehata, MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dr. Nadine Shehata is a Professor in the Departments of Medicine, Laboratory Management and Pathobiology and Institute of Health Policy Management and Evaluation and is an associate Member in the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. She is the Hematologist for the Special Pregnancy Program at Mount Sinai Hospital a division of the Medical Disorders of Pregnancy Program at the University of Toronto, an internationally acknowledged program recognized for its excellence in patient care, medical education and research. She is the Coordinator for the Maternal Fetal Hematology Fellowship program, a two year academic fellowship for Hematologists and Obstetricians/Maternal Fetal Medicine specialists aimed to develop future global leaders in academic Maternal Hematology.

She has received teaching awards from the Division of Hematology and Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology for teaching in the Maternal Hematology clinic. She has supervised research projects for students at the undergraduate, medical school and postgraduate levels.

Cynthia Whitehead, MD, PhD

Dr. Cynthia Whitehead is an education scientist, educator, and family physician. Her research examines the effects of power relations on various structures, systems, processes, and practices in health professions education, paying attention to who and what is advantaged or disadvantaged as a result. She aims to use her research findings to promote health and education practices that are compassionate, equitable, and effective. Working at the intersection of health and higher education, she sees exciting opportunities to harness the transformative potential of education in service of a healthier world. Cynthia's program of research is anchored in critical historical analyses of health professions education. Knowing our history is vital for understanding our current contexts, avoiding past mistakes, preserving what works well, and appropriately adapting that which needs change. Aware of the need to deliberately collect multiple perspectives and voices in the history of health professions education, Cynthia is engaged in efforts to preserve relevant archival materials. She is also committed to helping to grow the community of scholars interested in studying the history of the field.

Theoretically, Cynthia engages with the work of Michel Foucault, as well as post-colonialism, anticolonialism, and decoloniality. Some of her specific content areas of interest are globalized medical education, primary care education, accreditation, outcomes-based education, and education for collaboration.

Underpinning Cynthia's historical research is the knowledge that the creation of Euro-American models of higher education, health professions education, and healthcare institutions globally were intrinsically intertwined with European colonization of Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia. She understands that colonization has shaped and continues to perpetuate inequities in health professions education and research practices locally, nationally, and globally.

Cynthia is a Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine; Director and Scientist at the Wilson Centre, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto and University Health Network; and an academic family doctor based clinically at Women's College Hospital. She holds the BMO Financial Group Chair in Health Professions Education Research at University Health Network.

Azadeh Yadollahi, PhD

Dr. Yadollahi holds a Canada Research Chair-Tier 2 in Cardio-Respiratory Engineering, is a Senior Scientist at the University Health Network's KITE research institute (UHN-KITE), an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto's Institute of Biomedical Engineering, and an adjunct faculty at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Yadollahi is a strong advocate of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA), and chairs UHN Research's IDEA committee. Her research aims to improve understanding of the pathophysiology of cardio-respiratory disorders during sleep, and to develop novel technologies for improved management of these disorders. She is particularly interested in developing innovative technologies for monitoring of physiological signals at home and implementing equitable and accessible technologies for under-represented individuals with chronic cardio-respiratory disorders.

At UHN-KITE, Dr. Yadollahi leads the SleepdB laboratory. SleepdB is one of the few facilities in Canada dedicated to examining the intricate interplay between sleep, hemodynamics and cardio-respiratory disorders. SleepdB has gold standard clinical equipment to assess sleep and cardio-respiratory function. Moreover, through special infrastructure that enables full control of lighting and acoustics, SleepdB can realistically simulate home or in-hospital environments for technology development and validation. To date, Dr. Yadollahi has authored and co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed manuscripts, presented over 100 times in scientific conferences, filed 3 patents, and been invited to give 60 talks on her research at prominent national and international academic institutions.