Two years ago, a group of leaders—thoughtful women with extensive ties to the community—came together and asked a question, “What is the status of women and girls in New Haven?”

Their query led to an unprecedented effort to understand and document how women and girls in the community fare in health, education, economic security and earning potential, as well as in safety and political leadership.

This group of leaders, the Consortium for New Haven Women and Girls, was Co-Chaired by Dr. Chisara N. Asomugha, then the Community Services Administrator for the city, and Women’s Health Research at Yale Director Dr. Carolyn M. Mazure. Under their direction, the consortium compiled an array of data that now forms a baseline of knowledge for discussion and advocacy to improve the lives of the 68,000 women and girls who live in New Haven.

The report shows, for example, that:

- More than a quarter of the city’s residents live below the federal poverty level and more than half of those living in poverty in New Haven are female.

- Nearly a quarter of New Haven households are headed by single women, compared with 13 percent statewide.

- There is a great need for gender-specific health data, with particularly pressing knowledge gaps on cardiovascular disease, cancer, mental health conditions, and addictive behaviors including smoking.

- Mirroring national figures, women earn less than men with similar levels of education, leading to a persistent gender wage gap.

Primary funding for the report was provided by the Community Fund for Women & Girls at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, United Illuminating, Yale-New Haven Hospital, New Haven Healthy Start, and the Junior League of Greater New Haven. The report is available on our center’s website, at www.yalewhr.org.
JOIN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Consider a donation to Women’s Health Research at Yale in celebration of a birthday, a special occasion, or to honor someone in your life.

Our Society of Friends ensures the future of Women’s Health Research at Yale. Gifts are welcome at all levels.

To make an online gift visit www.yalewhr.org or mail your gift to
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Women’s Health Research at Yale was founded in 1998 with initial funding from The Patrick and Catherine Weldon Donaghue Medical Research Foundation.
Women & Trauma: Nationwide Study Puts New Focus on the Effects of Combat

Scientists studying how trauma affects the health of women and girls have long focused on domestic or intimate partner violence and childhood abuse. Trauma in men generally has been studied among emergency responders such as police and firefighters, and in relation to the experience of combat in war.

Today, however, substantial numbers of American women are military veterans who are returning home with combat experience, thus broadening the scope of traumatic experiences for women.

Our center’s Research Core on Women and Trauma is at the forefront of this evolving research focus. Women’s Health Research at Yale is a key partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on a collaborative, nationwide study – one of the first empirical investigations of its kind – to determine whether there are gender differences in how female and male combat veterans readjust to civilian life.

“In the past decade we’ve seen the largest number of women combat veterans ever,” said Dr. Rani Hoff, the study’s Principal Investigator and Director of our Research Core on Women and Trauma. “This is the first opportunity we’ve had to really understand the effects of combat on women, and gender differences that might or might not exist.”

This observational study is called the Survey of Experiences of Returning Veterans or SERV Study. It was designed in response to the unprecedented number of American military women who were exposed to and engaged in combat in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and concern that women are more susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than men, given similar experiences.

Women’s Health Research at Yale Director Dr. Carolyn M. Mazure, and Dr. Sherry McKee, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, are Co-Investigators on the Study. Hoff, Ph.D., M.P.H., is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine and Director of the Northeast Program Evaluation Center in West Haven, CT, which evaluates VA mental health services nationwide.

Historically, the VA patient population has been overwhelmingly male and studying gender differences has not been a priority. However, Hoff sees signs of change, as the readjustment experiences of women veterans and the importance of the study have gained the attention of VA leaders.

The changing makeup of the armed forces is driving this evolution. Since 1973, when conscription ended and an all-volunteer force was established, the number of women serving on active duty has risen dramatically – from about 42,000 to 167,000, according to a Pew Research Center report last December that relied on U.S. Department of Defense data. The share of women in the enlisted ranks has increased from 2% to 14%, and the share of commissioned officers has quadrupled from 4% to 16%, according to the report.

In addition, changes in military policies and a decade-long war have contributed to increases in combat exposure for women. Before 1990, only 7% of
female veterans had been exposed to combat, compared to 24% of female veterans after 1990, the Pew report says.

Although U.S. Department of Defense policy restricts women from serving in units in which the primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground, the irregular nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the often close proximity between support and combat units meant that more women than ever before found themselves in combat. Women in the armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan sometimes had to engage in combat, for example, when their units came under attack. The Army and the Marines utilized women to search Iraqi women for weapons and to patrol with foot soldiers. In Afghanistan, women have served in female engagement teams to help units deal with female villagers, according to a Congressional Research Service report issued in April 2012.

Of the approximately 2.4 million Americans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan in the past 10 years, more than 283,000 have been women, and both the Defense Department and veterans advocates recognize that an unprecedented number of women have been exposed to combat. Hundreds of Army women have received the Combat Action Badge. Of the 6,604 service members who have died as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 144 have been women, (as of Veterans Day, 2012), according to the Washington Post. Nearly 900 women have been wounded in the two wars, according to the congressional report.

Two concerns make the SERV study a high priority for society and science, according to Hoff. The first is that, given the same exposure to any type of trauma, women are more likely than men to develop PTSD. The second is that, compared to men, women enter the military having had more trauma as civilians, and may suffer trauma, including sexual assault, at the hands of their comrades more than men. Thus, women exposed to combat have a higher chance than their male counterparts of having to deal with what Hoff refers to as “compound trauma.”

“If there are differences in how combat affects women and men who are readjusting when they come home, my guess is it’s more likely due to the compound trauma problem,” she said. But it is still much too early in the study for answers, Hoff said.

The SERV study goal is to have at least 1,200 women and men as participants. Recruitment for the study is well under way as more than 250 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have agreed to participate and surveys have begun, she said.

The survey consists of five telephone interviews over one year, and participants have the option of remaining in the survey for several more years for follow-up questionnaires.

Enrolling veterans of these two wars presents particular challenges, according to Hoff, herself a veteran who served as an Army field medic, including a stint in Germany toward the end of the Cold War. Compared to previous generations, veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are more likely to move from where they lived before service or overseas deployment. In addition, they appear to be less interested in participating than older veterans in health projects like the SERV study and veterans organizations that could serve as focal points for information on the study, Hoff said.
“They’re very mobile,” she said. “Some are looking for employment opportunities, and so they are moving around a lot.”

To appeal to this generation of veterans, the SERV study is using recruitment videos on YouTube. Facebook advertisements began this year on Veterans Day, Hoff said. A study newsletter is sent to participants and is available online.

A practical benefit that Hoff foresees from this study is a restructuring of the VA’s services to deal with the changing veteran populations and potentially differing needs of women and men combat veterans.

While it is too early to speculate on what the study will find, she is sure of one thing. “If the study does show differences, my worst nightmare would be for someone to use the results to say women shouldn’t serve in the military. I wouldn’t want to see that,” Hoff said.

“It’s really a matter of figuring out who (man or woman) is vulnerable to poor health and readjustment outcomes, and what personal characteristics make someone (man or woman) resilient in the face of trauma.”

More information on the SERV Study is available online at: http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn1/serv/ or by calling (203) 932-5711 ext. 3730

A SERV Study recruitment video can be viewed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUvYfe9Gts

Congratulation Peter Salovey — Noted Psychology Scholar is Yale’s 23rd President

Women’s Health Research at Yale congratulates Yale President-Elect Peter Salovey, Ph.D.

In announcing Salovey’s unanimous selection as Yale University’s 23rd president on November 8, Senior Yale Corporation Fellow Edward P. Bass praised Salovey’s integrity, character and commitment to excellence. “These personal qualities,” he said, “combined with his significant leadership experience, his stature as a scholar, and his deep knowledge of and devotion to Yale, make him the best person to lead Yale well into the 21st century.”

Salovey, University Provost since 2008, is currently the Chris Argyris Professor of Psychology. His research focuses on the ways that human moods and emotions affect behavior and decision-making.

As part of his 30 years at Yale, Salovey was one of our 1999 Pilot Project Program funded investigators, studying how to optimize public health messages on the benefits of mammography screening. His findings were incorporated into the design of messages that have motivated countless women to seek screening for breast cancer. He credits his pilot data with helping him obtain further funding from the National Cancer Institute for his continuing studies on promoting cancer prevention through tailored messages.

Peter and his wife, Marta Moret, a graduate of the Yale School of Public Health, have lived in New Haven for more than 30 years. Marta is a member of our Advisory Council, and an expert in urban policy and planning.
Black Women & Smoking: The Role of Tobacco Ads in Urban Neighborhoods

Each year in the United States, approximately 443,000 deaths are attributed to using tobacco, and nearly 174,000 of those who die are women. Smoking, as these figures from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show, is the leading preventable cause of illness and death among Americans.

Quitting smoking is among the most important behavioral changes a person can make to improve health, yet women have more difficulty quitting than men. And among women, black women are less likely to succeed in quitting than white women.

This racial disparity in women’s smoking cessation is of particular public health significance, says Dr. Azure B. Thompson, a BIRCWH Scholar and Associate Research Scientist in Yale’s Department of Psychiatry, because smoking can exacerbate health burdens that are already greater for black women than women in general, including cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease.

Thompson is studying smoking among black women as part of her training as a junior faculty scholar. She was selected – from a highly competitive national field – to fill one of four junior faculty research training slots under a federally-funded research training grant awarded to Dr. Carolyn M. Mazure, our Director, as Principal Investigator.

This grant – called the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health, or BIRCWH – has provided the funding to establish a program to train exceptional junior faculty interested in a research career focused on women’s health and addictive behaviors. The training program, funded through a $2.5 million grant, is available only to top-level candidates who have earned an M.D., Ph.D., or equivalent and have already completed post-doctoral training.

Before graduate school, Thompson earned a bachelor’s degree at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she majored in journalism. She wrote about health topics, including HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy, for a year at the Afro-American, a newspaper that served the Washington metropolitan area. But she wanted to do more than observe and write about health problems, so she decided to pursue a career in public health.

Thompson earned an M.P.H. and a Dr.P.H. (Doctor of Public Health) degree from Columbia University, and continued her studies with post-doctoral training in mental health at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

In her current research as a Yale BIRCWH scholar, Thompson is trying to gain an understanding of the risks that underlie what has begun to emerge – in Thompson’s previous work and studies by other scientists – as a paradox in smoking among black women.

The most common stage in life for starting smoking among both women and men is adolescence. However, among women who start smoking in adulthood, this phenomenon is more common in black women, according to Thompson, and a number of studies indicate that individuals who start smoking as adults have higher rates of quitting success than
individuals who start smoking as adolescents. Yet the paradox is that, even though black women tend to start smoking as adults, they are less likely to quit than white women.

Thompson published findings from previous work in the January 2011 edition of the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, showing that the disparity in quit rates between black and white women was mostly among those women who started smoking as adults.

Why black women tend to start smoking later than white women and have less success quitting remain largely unknown. Thus, Thompson’s work addresses a current gap in research on tobacco use, as most investigations thus far have focused on the initiation of smoking among adolescents.

In her BIRCWH Scholar research projects, she is exploring the complex relationship between the onset of smoking among young adult black women and various social and behavioral factors, while also trying to determine why black women have a harder time quitting smoking.

In studies she is currently developing for publication, Thompson found that black women were more likely than white women to start smoking after giving birth to their first child. Earlier studies by other researchers suggest that black women who start smoking in adulthood after giving birth to their first child might be parenting with little familial support. Stressors associated with being a new parent and smoking behaviors of other family members are other critical factors that need to be examined for their influence on whether young adult black women start smoking, Thompson hypothesizes. The presence of post-partum depression is yet another factor that merits examination, she says.

As part of her BIRCWH research, she is also studying how neighborhood environment may affect smoking behavior among black women who started smoking as adults. In this area of her studies, she is collaborating with Dr. Jacob K. Tebes, her primary mentor in the junior-faculty training program. Tebes is Professor of Psychiatry.

Thompson is conducting this part of her research in three neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These neighborhoods all have high concentrations of small retail outlets that sell cigarettes and other tobacco products, and heavy concentrations of cigarette advertising, both in-store signs and outdoor advertising on the sides of the buildings where tobacco products are sold.

Under a 1998 settlement of major litigation between most states and the large tobacco companies the states had sued, tobacco advertising was banned from billboards and transit advertising, such as placards in buses or subway cars. Tobacco brand-name sponsorship also was prohibited at most concerts and sporting events.
However, the 1998 settlement did not restrict cigarette or tobacco product advertising inside stores where tobacco products are sold, and permitted outdoor advertising with signs of 14 square feet or smaller – on the buildings or property of businesses where tobacco products are sold.

Since the settlement, cigarette makers have become more aggressive in targeting high-risk groups, including minorities and youth, with advertising, redesigned products with more nicotine, and aggressively marketed brands popular with young blacks, according to testimony in 2007 before a U.S. Senate committee, from the director of the Center for Global Tobacco Control.

A 2007 review of studies comparing tobacco advertising aimed at blacks and whites, published in the journal *Public Health Reports*, found that the “odds that any given advertisement was smoking-related were 70 percent higher in African American areas vs. Caucasian areas, and there were 2.6 times as many tobacco advertisements per person in African American areas as compared with Caucasian areas.” According to the study’s findings, black smokers may require disproportionate and specially tailored public health interventions to counter the effect of the heavy pro-tobacco promotions.

One of Thompson’s long-term research goals is to use the information she gains in neighborhoods like the ones she is studying in Philadelphia and data she obtains from black women smokers to create interventions that would improve success rates for quitting smoking among black women.

Ultimately, she plans to seek a grant to develop a specially-tailored intervention aimed at preventing smoking and promoting successful quitting among young black women.

“Racial disparities in women’s smoking cessation are of particular public health significance because of the smoking-related health burden experienced by black women,” Thompson said. “Determining why adult black women take up smoking and developing prevention strategies would greatly benefit the health of these women and their families.”
Celebrate! and Help Us Keep Marching On

Put your party hats on!
It’s time to celebrate our 15th anniversary.

*Women’s Health Research at Yale* has come a long way since 1998, thanks to our dedicated donors. In these short years, we’ve put research on women’s health and gender differences on the national map.

But we need your help to keep moving forward – and we’ve got a long way to go. If you saw the *The New York Times* article (October 17th) on a study of multivitamin use linked to decreased cancer risk, you’ll know why we cannot ever falter in our efforts.

The study included only men!

Our 2013 Annual Appeal is already in full swing, following our successful 2012 appeal. With your support, we’ll keep pushing to include women in clinical research, and generate findings on the key health concerns for women today – findings that can benefit all of the women in our lives.

Please make a gift. We need you as partners in advancing knowledge to improve women’s health.

Thank You!

Patti Russo, Chair
Philanthropy & Communications

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The Power of Partnership: Women’s Health Research at Yale & YaleWomen Link to Boost Women’s Voices

Women’s Health Research at Yale and YaleWomen, the first global network of Yale women alumni, have joined to help each other improve the lives of women.

The alumni network was formed after events at Yale in 2010 to celebrate 40 years of women in Yale College and 140 years of women at Yale.

A member of our advisory Council, Ellen Gibson McGinnis, J.D., Yale Class of 1982, is Chair of YaleWomen. As she explained recently in YaleWomen’s first online quarterly newsletter, “YaleWomen’s mission is to create a vibrant, engaged community of alums, drawn together by the common thread of our Yale experiences, that is committed to advancing women’s voices and perspectives and to enriching and inspiring one another, Yale, and the world.”

Women’s Health Research at Yale is celebrating its 15th anniversary and has grown to become a national model. “Our missions to improve the well-being of women are closely aligned and in concert YaleWomen and our center can make a real difference,” said Director, Dr. Carolyn M. Mazure.

YaleWomen will feature our center in a “Partner Highlight” in the alumni group’s next newsletter edition in December. In addition, Dr. Mazure will be among the speakers at YaleWomen’s inaugural, international conference next April 19th and 20th in Washington, D.C. The conference will focus on the place of women around the world today and the importance of women’s voices on the world stage.
In Memory

Mary B. Arnstein

It is with regret that Women’s Health Research at Yale shares news of Mary Arnstein’s passing.

Mary, a founding member of our advisory Council, and a tireless advocate for advancing opportunities for women, died on September 3rd. She was 85.

“For the past 12 years, Mary served on our Council with thoughtfulness, grace, humor and intelligence,” Dr. Mazure said. “In Council meetings, her trademark was asking for needed clarity of next steps before the end of every meeting.”

Mrs. Arnstein was the first recipient of Women’s Health Research at Yale’s Women of Vision Award, honoring her outstanding contributions to the cause of women’s health.

A graduate of Vassar College, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in child study, Mrs. Arnstein was an inaugural founder of the Community Fund for Women & Girls. She was one of the first women to be honored with the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Award; one of the first three special recipients of the YWCA of New Haven’s Annual Women in Leadership Award; the first woman elected to the board of directors of the New Haven Water Co., and the second woman elected to the board of trustees of Yale-New Haven Hospital.

“She was dedicated to both Yale and to New Haven, and did not create artificial boundaries limiting her efforts to one or the other. Rather, she integrated these efforts for the benefit of both,” Dr. Mazure said during a remembrance gathering on September 13th to celebrate Mary’s life.

From 1972 to 1974, soon after Yale College began admitting women, Mrs. Arnstein served as Acting Special Assistant to Yale University President Kingman Brewster Jr. and was Chair of the University Committee on the Education of Women. During this time, the Yale Corporation was persuaded to move toward changing the admission policy, so that incoming classes would no longer have numerical gender quotas.

A key passage of the 1974 report by the committee that Mrs. Arnstein chaired, read at the September 13th gathering by Dr. Mazure, says, “For Yale University to be truly co-educated, it will mean not only a co-educated student population with equal educational opportunities but also a commitment on the part of the total University community to provide women the opportunity to participate at all levels within the University structure on an equal basis with men.”

By example and through community service, Mary Arnstein opened doors for women. She was truly a woman of vision.
Ellen McGinnis Awarded Yale Medal

Ellen Gibson McGinnis, J.D., a member of our advisory Council since 2010, was honored this year with the Yale Medal. It is the Association of Yale Alumni’s highest award, recognizing outstanding service to the University.

Ellen, a partner with the Washington, D.C. firm Haynes and Boone, graduated cum laude from Yale College in 1982. She earned her J.D. at New York University Law School.

Her medal citation says Ellen “has shown exceptional devotion to Yale, serving in many volunteer leadership roles.” She is a founding member and current Chair of YaleWomen, the new organization for women alums. In addition, she has served as member, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-Chair and Chair of AYA’s Board of Governors.

Ellen was honored at a dinner November 9th.

Aurora Foundation Honors Eileen Kraus

Advisory Council Member Eileen S. Kraus, a pioneering corporate leader, recently was honored by the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation as its 2012 Woman Philanthropist of the Year.

Each year the West Hartford-based foundation recognizes a woman who contributes to her community in significant ways. A founder of the organization, Eileen was recognized this year as a role model, inspiration, passionate advocate and local hero – demonstrating the power of philanthropy to transform communities and individuals.

Eileen was one of the first women to run a major financial institution in the United States, becoming president of Connecticut National Bank in 1992. She has long been active on the boards of community, philanthropic, arts, educational and economic development organizations.

Kraus was honored with the award at an annual breakfast event on October 4th in West Hartford.

Diane Turner Directs New Hiring Initiative

Advisory Council Member Diane Young Turner is leading a new Yale collaborative effort with New Haven’s elected officials, other employers and labor unions to help New Haven residents get jobs. Diane recently was appointed Director of Yale’s New Haven Community Hiring Initiatives, moving from her post as Associate University Librarian for Human Resources.

In her new human resources post, Diane will oversee Yale’s efforts to hire and train New Haven residents as part of the collaborative effort to reduce unemployment in the city. “We all understand the importance of getting this work done,” she said, noting there is a link between high unemployment and crime. Yale, she said, views this new initiative as an extension of other university efforts – including a homebuyers’ program and an initiative to improve the public schools and provide college scholarships to the best students – to strengthen Yale’s relationship with New Haven and help the city and its residents.

Carol Ross Honored for Arts’ Contributions

Our advisory Council Chair, Carol Ross, will be recognized this month by the Arts Council of Greater New Haven for her outstanding efforts on behalf of the arts. Carol will receive the C. Newton Schenck III Award for Lifetime Achievement in and Contribution to the Arts.

As the Arts Council states, and we well know, “Words can barely describe the impact, influence, and respect Carol Ross has had in the arts community. A dedicated educator, steadfast leader, ardent music enthusiast, she has not only contributed sagely but has collaborated across fields to the great benefit of all of us.” She will receive the award on December 7th at a luncheon at the New Haven Lawn Club.

Carol has served on the boards of numerous non-profit organizations. A founding supporter of our endowment, she has been a Council member since 2009, and Council Chair since September 2011.
Why do gender differences in biology and behavior need to be studied?

Watch our new 2-minute video—
“You Can’t See the Whole Picture with One Eye Closed”

Available on YouTube & our Video Gallery
To access our videos, go to: www.yalewhr.org