



Research on Pelvic Floor Disorders

NASEM Committee on the Assessment of NIH Research
on Women's Health
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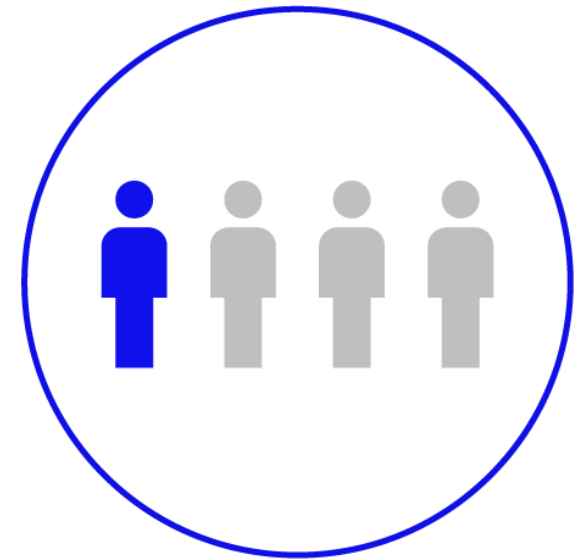
Disclosures

- None
- Prior funding
 - K12 HD065257 (WRHR)
 - 5P30 AG024824, UL1TR002240 (Pepper Center)
 - R03 HD096189 (NICHD)

Pelvic Floor Disorders

- Common conditions, significantly affect quality of life
 - Pelvic Organ Prolapse
 - Urinary Incontinence/Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms
 - Fecal Incontinence
 - Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections
 - Sexual Health in Women with Pelvic Floor Disorders
 - Bladder Pain Syndrome/Interstitial Cystitis
 - Myofascial Pelvic Pain

1 in 4 women



**>25 million U.S. women
affected annually**

Pelvic Organ Prolapse

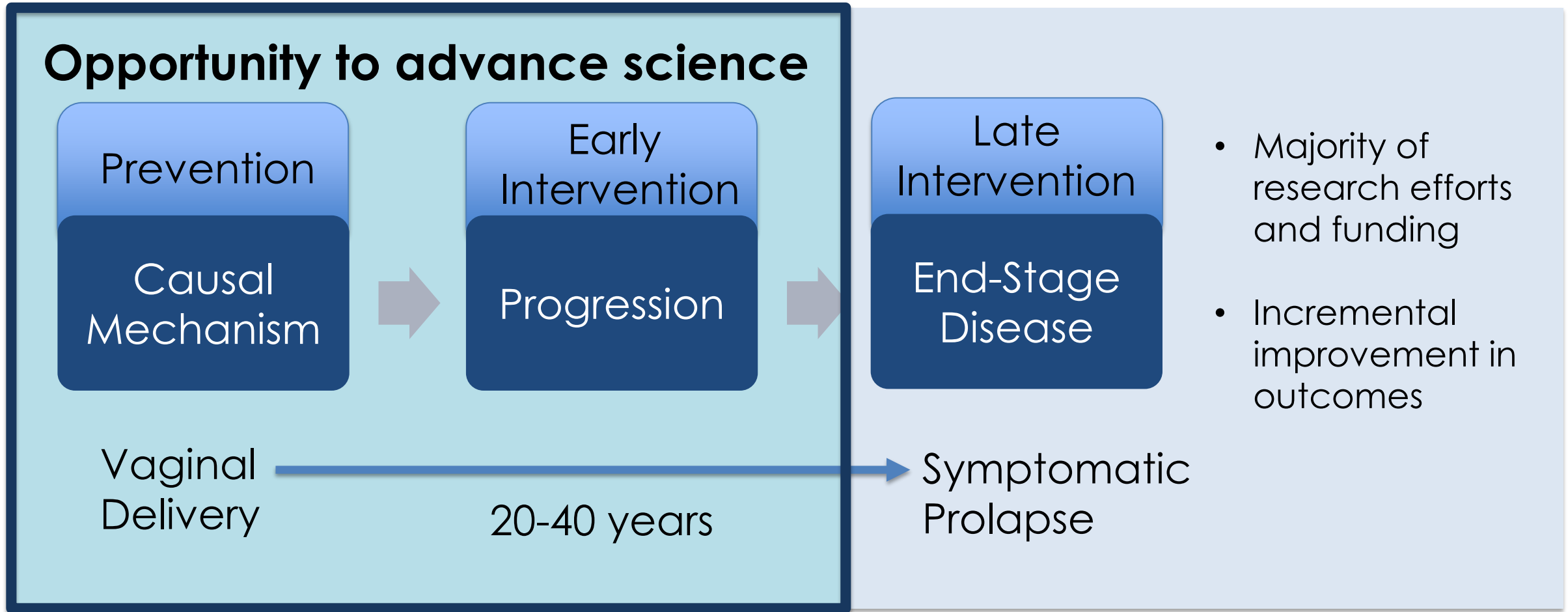
- Affects up to 50% of women
 - Vaginal bulge, pressure, discomfort
 - Difficulty emptying bladder and bowels
 - Activity restriction, social isolation, decreased quality of life
- 1 in 5 women have surgery for prolapse
- High surgical failure rate
 - up to 30% reoperation



1806 French artist and physician, J.L Baron Alibert

References: Swift SE. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2000, Løwenstein E, Int Urogynecol J. 2015, Olsen AL. Obstet Gynecol. 1997, Smith FJ. Obstet Gynecol 2010, Wu JM. Obstet Gynecol 2014

State of Research on Pelvic Organ Prolapse



Knowledge Gaps for Prolapse

Basic Science

- Normal and abnormal pelvic floor function
- Structural components of pelvic support
- Genetic factors

Mechanisms of Disease

- Overall disease model
- Patient-specific causal mechanisms
 - Structural
 - Functional
 - Heritable

Prevention & Early Intervention

- Effective screening and monitoring
- Effective prevention and early intervention strategies
- Sociodemographic contributors
 - Health disparities
 - Access to care

Barriers to Overcoming Knowledge Gaps

Strong Competing Interests

- Surgeon-scientist model challenging
- Clinical work valued > research
- Junior investigators lacking

- 2021 study of diseases that unequally affect one gender, **75%** of NIH funding went to male-dominated diseases
- From FY2017 to FY2019, **10%** of NIH funding was allocated to women's health research
 - **78.6%** on contraception, pregnancy

Lack of Funding

- Majority of women's health funding goes to pregnancy and maternity related conditions
- Lack of institute/study section alignment
 - NIA
 - NICHD
 - NIDDK

Potential Solutions

Strong Competing Interests

- Expand funding & mentorship opportunities to support early- and mid-career investigators
- Promote formalized research training during post-graduate medical education.
- Support investment in a physician-scientist workforce with expertise in PFDs

National Urogynecology Research Agenda 2023

*A Path Forward for Advancing the
Treatment and Management of
Pelvic Floor Disorders*

Developed by the AUGS Scientific Committee

Potential Solutions

Lack of Funding

- Prioritize PFD research \$\$
- Expand the pool of reviewers who are experts in various women's health topics and to ensure appropriate study section assignment
- Create a PFD study section

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