

Dear Colleagues,

Women’s College Hospital (WCH) is deeply committed to the highest standards of research, ethics and patient safety. We adhere to rigorous policies and practices that guide how research is conducted and how results are recorded and reported. We take allegations of any research misconduct extremely seriously and investigate all cases in accordance with our Research Misconduct Policy. The purpose of our policy is to ensure fair, accurate, objective inquiries and investigations of any allegations.

Recently, WCH was advised of allegations of research misconduct on the part of one of our scientists, Dr. Sophie Jamal. Dr. Jamal’s research focused on the effects of nitrates on bone health. WCH together with the University of Toronto conducted an inquiry and subsequently WCH conducted a rigorous and comprehensive investigation of these allegations in accordance with our Research Misconduct Policy.

The investigating committee concluded that there is unequivocal evidence of systematic data manipulation by Dr. Jamal. Prior to the conclusion of the investigation Dr. Jamal resigned from the hospital.

We believe it is important to share this information with you - our WCH community – and with our stakeholders. Our policy provides specific guidelines on how such investigations should be reported to external stakeholders, research collaborators, funding agencies, academic partners and scientific journals. Once informed, these groups determine their own course of action based on their respective frameworks.

We have notified relevant research participants, via registered letter, that they may have received inaccurate information about this research. We have found no evidence to suggest that there have been negative outcomes for these participants.

The investigating committee found there to be no deficiencies in any institutional systems or processes at Women’s College Hospital. WCH fully complied with its Research Misconduct Policy in conducting this investigation and ensured that the allegations were addressed promptly, thoroughly and effectively.

All staff, trainees and investigators who wish to conduct research involving human participants under the auspices of WCH are required to complete a nationally recognized training program on research quality. Additionally, as an academic hospital, Women’s College Hospital adheres to nationally accepted standards as well as university and hospital policies that promote research of the highest ethical standards, including:

* Tri-Agency Agreement on the Administration of Agency grants and awards by research institutions.
* Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.
* University of Toronto Policy on Ethical Conduct in Research
* Policies/regulations of funding agencies
* WCH policies on:
* Ethical Conduct in Research
* Conflicts of Interest
* Research Misconduct
* WCH Research Ethics board review and approval of research projects
* WCH Research Ethics Board Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Each year Women’s College Research Institute scientists, in collaboration with national and international partners, lead hundreds of research studies and publish in highly respected, peer-reviewed journals. We continue to have the utmost respect for the research our scientists are leading to advance the health of women and girls and to make a lasting impact on our patients, communities and our health system.

Marilyn

President and CEO

Women’s College Hospital