

**Project Title:** Women’s Center for Preservation of Motion and Performance at UConn Health

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**Collaborators and Mentors:** Allison Schafer, DO, Assistant Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery and Casey Jacob, PhD, Emeritus Professor, Psychiatry and OBGYN

**Background and Significance:**

Targeting the care of the female orthopaedic patients has been a primary goal of elite orthopaedic departments around the country. There are unique biomechanical and physiological differences between men and women, many of which place women at a higher risk for certain MSK and athletic injuries. Recognizing this, twenty-one institutions have built centers of excellence for treatment of female athletes. At UConn and UConn Health we have prioritized female athletes, and have built a legacy in women's basketball. Less well known is our ability to care for physically active women who may not consider themselves “athletes” in a traditional sense.

We will establish the UConn Health Women’s Center for Preservation of Motion and Performance. The mission is to build a center of excellence targeting the care of female athletes of all ages and activity levels with an integrated multidisciplinary approach that is patient-centric and can improve clinical outcomes and efficiencies, facilitates gender-specific clinical research, and promotes the expansion and integration of high-margin clinical services in an increasingly competitive market.

**Objectives:**

The success of this project depends on the creation of a unified multidisciplinary team including orthopaedics, nonoperative sports medicine, neurology, physical therapy, behavioral health, internal medicine and nutritional services.

Key to successful implementation and growth will be the ability to market our multidisciplinary approach.

**Methods:**

- Conduct patient-based survey on current decentralized model and needs assessment for a more streamlined approach
- Conduct a nationwide review of current programs that target this demographic.
- Identify and recruit center providers.
- Gain institutional leadership support and develop a strategic plan.
- Develop a marketing plan.
- Host quarterly meetings of participating providers to discuss collaboration and provide feedback on comprehensive coordinated care.

**Outcomes/Results:**

- Improve outcomes evaluated by PROMs.
- Improve patient satisfaction measured by Press- Ganey and online reviews.
- Increase clinical expansion evaluated by zip code.
- Publish 2 gender-specific clinical research manuscripts.
- Provide educational opportunities for trainees from all participating departments and the medical school, and encourage the next generation of providers to include sex and gender in their treatment paradigms.

**Conclusion and Potential Impact:**

The development of the Women’s Center for Preservation of Motion and Performance at UConn Health will become a national recognized center of excellence for coordinated comprehensive care of active women of all ages. Given the unique biomechanical and physiological differences between men and women, many of which place women at a higher risk for certain MSK and athletic injuries, a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of active women is important to provide optimal patient care.

Our Center will specialize in understanding sex-based differences and providing female patients with personalized prevention strategies, individualized treatment options, and better outcomes. The Center will in turn bolster and complement the education, research and community service missions of UConn Health.