



Women's Health Research Roundtable: Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 3-4 p.m. EDT

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FEATURING:



Bertha Chen, MD
Professor,
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Ngan F. Huang
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Cellular mechanisms in the vagina of women with recurrent vaginal prolapse after prolapse surgery

Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) involves the downward movement of pelvic organs and affects about 40% of women aged 50–79. Surgery is the primary treatment, yet recurrence occurs in up to 29% of cases, often requiring additional procedures. Progress toward new therapies is limited by poor understanding of post-surgical changes in vaginal tissue. Prior studies show reduced smooth muscle cells, impaired contractility, and connective tissue defects. We hypothesize that surgery further disrupts connective tissue, fibroblast function, and smooth muscle content, weakening vaginal support and increasing recurrence risk. This talk reviews surgical limitations and outlines our approach to studying post-surgical cellular changes.



Heidi S. Harvie, MD, MSCE, MBA
Division Chief Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery
Perelman School of Medicine
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Pelvic Organ Prolapse: Pelvic Floor Disorders Network Trials and Future Research Directions

Pelvic floor disorders (PFDs) are conditions in women that affect the support and function of the pelvic organs and lower urinary and gastrointestinal tracts, such as pelvic organ prolapse (POP), urinary and fecal incontinence. Historically under-recognized, PFDs are common among women, and significantly affect quality of life, daily activities, and sexual function. POP occurs in up to half of parous women with lifetime risk of POP surgery approaching 20% and up to 30% requiring reoperations for POP. Recognizing the need for rigorous studies on PFDs, the NIH established the Eunice Kennedy Shriver NICHD Pelvic Floor Disorders Network (PFDN) in 2001 to encourage multicenter, multi-disciplinary collaborative research on PFDs to improve care. This talk will highlight research projects from the PFDN and suggest future research directions.

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