Supervisor Name: Alysha Nensi

Project Title: The Impact of Health Literacy on Patient Reported Outcomes in Benign Gynecology: A Systematic Review

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Field of Research (2 keywords): Quality improvement, health literacy

Department: Obstetrics and Gynecology

School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No: No
If YES, please name:
**Brief Project Description (<300 words):**

Health literacy is “the extent to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information that is needed to make appropriate health decisions.”\(^1\). It has been estimated that 60% of Canadians have limited health literacy that makes it difficult to manage their health-related needs\(^2\). Several studies have demonstrated an association between poor health literacy and negative patient outcomes such as worse disease-specific knowledge,\(^3\) poorer self-reported health\(^4\) and increased hospitalizations and readmissions\(^5,6,7\). Low levels of health literacy are more prevalent in minority populations, among persons for whom English is a second language, people with low levels of income and education, and elder communities\(^8\).

The management of benign gynecologic disorders such as abnormal uterine bleeding, fibroids and endometriosis often requires advanced health literacy skills due to the need to understand the relevant anatomy and clinical presentations, recognizing the severity of associated symptoms, management of medication regimens and review available treatment options, both medical and surgical. Inability to understand medication instructions or pre-operative instructions may result in compromised patient safety and a failure to deliver patient-centered, equitable care. The main objective of this systematic review is to evaluate the relationship between health literacy and patient-reported outcomes (PROs) in patients with benign gynecologic conditions. We also seek to examine the current reported prevalence of patients with inadequate health literacy in the same population.

The student will be involved with screening of manuscripts, data extraction, risk of bias assessment and manuscript writing with support from the study team including clinical fellows, the principal investigator and the department research assistants. There will be an opportunity to learn about the development of systematic reviews and training using the Cochrane Handbook. Students who are interested in quality improvement and the role of health equity in patient outcomes are encouraged to apply.

**References**

