**Global Consortium for Reproductive Longevity & Equality (GCRLE)**

**Mission & Vision Statement**

**The Challenge: Reframing the narrative around women’s health**

Women’s health has long been sidelined as a niche subcategory of medicine, garnering barely 10% of research dollars and 4% of biopharma investment while impacting over half the global population. A tiny fraction of that — less than 1% — has been applied to study **ovarian aging**, arguably the most important but simultaneously the most neglected topic affecting women’s health and wellbeing.

Ovarian aging will impact every single female on the planet who lives to mid-life. Put simply, ovaries are the **architects of health and the pacemaker for aging** in women’s bodies. Ovaries age prematurely, at over twice the rate of other organs, and as more women globally delay childbearing this can lead to infertility, miscarriages, and birth defects. Beyond reproduction, ovaries release hormones that signal to nearly every tissue in the body to promote general health. When those hormone levels decline and eventually disappear at midlife, this leads to increased risk of developing a host of diseases including dementia, metabolic disorders, and depression spike. Half of postmenopausal women develop osteoporosis, more than double the rate of men, and menopause quadruples the risk for a cardiovascular event.

The consequences of reproductive aging are profound for both fertility and overall health, yet we don’t understand the most basic things about it — what sets it in motion, why it varies so much between individuals, or why it is correlated with overall lifespan. **Systemic sex bias** and **dramatic underfunding** in biomedical research have limited progress in addressing these key questions. Reproductive longevity is about **far more than fertility or menopause** and its accompanying health risks. It involves a woman’s entire life experience and impacts career, family planning, and most importantly, health and well-being — this is about **equality**.

**The Solution: Building the ecosystem to extend ovarian function**

The **Global Consortium for Reproductive Longevity & Equality (GCRLE)** is a moonshot initiative to tackle female reproductive aging, launched at the Buck Institute with seed funding from the Bia-Echo Foundation in 2020. We want to figure out what leads to ovarian decline in females and develop interventions to slow or reverse it. **The GCRLE’s role is to facilitate & accelerate translating scientific discoveries from the lab into useful products and therapies that positively impact women’s reproductive lives.** We are building an intellectual network of scientists in academia and biotech, clinicians, funders, and thought leaders from all over the world to promote a collaborative dialogue about women, aging and health.

Our goal is to extend ovarian function to improve healthspan in women, so we need to engage an army of creative scientists and visionaries to work collaboratively on this problem. In essence, we are building the field. We envision the Consortium as an innovation hub that supports a quickly growing knowledge base, to build a sustainable, impactful, research space. We need a paradigm shift to make it work - novel, innovative operating ideas that incentivize collaboration and conversation between stakeholders who would normally not interact. We want to mold the way industry and academic partners work together that go beyond traditional models so that opportunities and partnerships are realized earlier. This
will accelerate discovery toward new products, diagnostics, and therapies for reproductive longevity.

The GCRLE, by focusing research on understanding how and why women go through reproductive decline in mid-life, has the potential to dramatically and significantly improve the health and well-being of women worldwide. We aim to balance the inequities women face managing family, career and health decisions. To accomplish this, we are:

- **Funding scientists.** Since 2020 we have distributed more than $14.5 M in research grants to 49 scientists worldwide to pursue innovative research on ovarian aging. We provide these scholars with infrastructure, collaboration and network-building opportunities, paths to translation, as well as additional technical and scientific support for their research.

- **Creating a thriving community.** The Center at the Buck Institute was the first of its kind, and we created the first-ever international conference dedicated to reproductive longevity to nucleate the field and provide a forum for collaboration and brainstorming. We built advisory boards of experts to provide translational and clinical support, advocate for public funding, and propel the science forward.

- **Building resources for researchers.** We are pioneering a comprehensive knowledge hub with layers of information about topics in female reproductive aging spanning definitions to updates on the most cutting-edge research in real time vetted by scientists and clinicians. We built a reproductive biology core facility centered at the Buck Institute that provides learning opportunities and experimental help for researchers around the world interested in ovarian aging. We are also building a biobank for discarded tissue to better help researchers access hard-to-find human samples.

- **Building a global infrastructure.** Connecting people, clinicians, entrepreneurs, companies, and researchers to accelerate progress. To build the ecosystem in a novel way we are bringing people from different backgrounds together, connecting the science with entrepreneurs. Advances that will most rapidly lead to products and therapies for women are made through collaborations between academia and industry, utilizing the distinct expertise of both.

- **Advocating for change and greater investment.** We are spreading the word to change the narrative, lobby governmental and other private funders to recognize this as a funding priority and encourage new funders in this space.

We are in a historic moment when the conversation about women’s reproductive health is evolving – there is a palpable synergy as taboos around female bodies are shattered, periods, miscarriage, sex, menopause – women all over the world are pushing for open honest conversations to normalize their reproductive health issues and tackle infertility and menopause. It is imperative that we **expand funding for research** and find new ways to empower women with parity and options in their reproductive choices. Our goal is to build the field to understand the basic biological mechanisms that trigger female reproductive aging, from the earliest stages through to menopause, and ultimately leverage this understanding to intervene and balance the scales.

For more information, please visit [https://gcrle.org/](https://gcrle.org/)