

UBC Public Affairs

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Did you know...

UBC researchers, who conduct more than 5,000 investigations annually, attracted \$377 million in research funding in 2002/2003.

Baby Stress Expert to Lead International Research Program

A University of British Columbia and BC Children's Hospital expert on infant stress and shaken baby syndrome has been named director of an international research program of the Canadian Institutes of Advanced Research (CIAR).

Ronald G. Barr, a professor of pediatrics in UBC's Faculty of Medicine and Canada Research Chair in Community Child Health, will lead a research program called Experience-based Brain and Biological Development, one of 10 CIAR programs in Canada.

The appointment provides research team funding for an initial term of five years.

"How we care for babies literally 'gets under their skin' to influence their biological development and healthy growth, including memory and language development," says Barr, who also directs the Centre for Community Child Health Research at BC Children's Hospital and the BC Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health. "Canada has some eminent early experience researchers and is well-positioned to be an international leader in this vital area of study."

Barr will organize several international program meetings per year, starting in 2004, to examine how biology and environment interact to influence health, learning and behaviour from infancy to adulthood.

Questions include how infant experiences such as crying and nursing affect the baby's genetic development and how the relationship between mother and baby affects how children handle stress. The group will also explore how interactions between psychological and physiological events in a child's early life – such as first experiences at school – produce long-term changes in hormones, the immune system and behaviour.

UBC's Faculty of Medicine currently graduates 128 students annually from a four-year program and attracts more than \$90 million in research funding annually.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Established in 1995, the BC Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health is dedicated to advancing the health of women and children. It operates in partnership with UBC and Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC.

Founded in 1982, CIAR provides Canada's university researchers with a forum to develop ideas, building a knowledge base to maintain Canada's internationally competitive position in knowledge creation.

Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. It is made up of British Columbia's Children's Hospital, British Columbia's Women's Hospital and Health Centre, and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children and focuses on patient care, education and research.