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# Receiving \$8.2 million for extension of women's health study

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By **Henry L. Davis**

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The University at Buffalo is getting \$8.2 million for an extension of the landmark Women's Health Initiative, a federally funded study that will continue through 2015 research into such conditions as heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis and stroke.

The National Institutes of Health established the Women's Health Initiative in 1991 to address the most common causes of death and disability in postmenopausal women.

UB, which is expected to announce the grant today, has participated in the nationwide project since 1993 and will play a leadership role in the extension, overseeing the Northeast region's nine participating institutions.

These include Harvard, Stony Brook and George Washington universities.

The Women's Health Initiative involved more than 162,000 women, including 4,000 in Buffalo, and is the largest study ever of women. One of the key findings was that estrogen didn't reduce the risk of heart disease and increased the risk of stroke in postmenopausal women who had a hysterectomy.

"The Women's Health Initiative has been about prevention of disease. Now, we're also going to be looking at predictors of disease," said Jean Wactawski-Wende, principal investigator on the new award at UB.

More than 100,000 women at dozens of research institutions across the country are expected to participate in the extension study.

Three other regional centers received about \$7.5 million each and are headquartered at Stanford University, Wake Forest University and Ohio State University. It's expected that the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Institute in Seattle will coordinate the work of all the institutions.

UB investigators plan to look into such issues as the relationship between vitamin D and the chronic diseases of aging, and the role of genetics in cancer and other conditions, said Wactawski-Wende, a professor and associate chair of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, and a professor of gynecology-obstetrics.

*hdavis@buffnews.com*

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