Stephanie-May Ruchat, Ph.D., Full Professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR), Canada, holds a postdoctoral degree in physical activity and maternal and neonatal health (Western Ontario, Canada) and in foetal epigenetic programming (Sherbrooke University, Canada).

Since 2014, I make a highly significant contribution to my field of research in physical activity and perinatal health. I co-led the development of the ***2019 Canadian Guideline for Physical Activity Throughout Pregnancy (Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada [SOGC] and Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology [CSEP])***. The recommendations were based on **12 systematic reviews and meta-analyses**, all published alongside the guidelines in two special issues of the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (BJSM), the top-ranked journal in the field. The guidelines were also published in English and French in the *Journal of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada*. As of October 2025, the BJSM guideline paper has been cited over **857 times** and downloaded **309,000+** times. The guideline has had substantial clinical and policy impact, "revolutionizing the way prenatal physical activity is considered—from a recommended behavior to a prescribed strategy for optimized maternal health." They have been integrated into policies in **10 countries**, and referenced by organizations including the **World Health Organization**, the **European Union**, and **Hypertension Canada**. Following the Guideline publication, we developed the ***Get Active Questionnaire for pregnancy*** and the ***Health Care Provider Consultation Form for Prenatal Physical Activity*** to support shared decision-making and empower pregnant individuals. Available in **10 languages**, these tools are now internationally recognized reference resources in prenatal physical activity.

I also co-led the development of the first international guidelines addressing physical activity, sedentary behavior, and sleep in the first year postpartum, the ***CSEP 2025 Canadian Guideline for Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep throughout the First Year Postpartum***. This work extended the prenatal guidelines and addressed pressing needs regarding the safe return to physical activity after childbirth. The project led to **9 peer-reviewed publications**, including **7 meta-analyses** and a Delphi consensus study, all published in a BJSM special issue. Since their release in March 2025, the Guideline have been downloaded **46,000+** times. Their anticipated impact is substantial across both research and clinical practice. To accompany this Guideline, we developed the ***Get Active Questionnaire for Postpartum***, designed to help healthy postpartum individuals overcome any concerns they might have with getting or staying active.

Since the health of pregnant people and their future children is closely linked to the preconception health of their parents, I have conducted research focusing on reproductive health. In collaboration with a regional fertility clinic, we identified that many couples undergoing fertility treatment have suboptimal lifestyle habits, which may, at least in part, explain their difficulty in conceiving a child, but also hinder the success of fertility treatments. This hypothesis is currently being tested as part of the FertiSanté study, a Canadian multicentre randomised controlled trial in which I am a co-researcher. To facilitate patient and provider education, we translated and validated the ***Cardiff Fertility Knowledge Scale*** and the ***Fertility Status Awareness Tool***, now used in fertility care settings.

To improve understanding and management of pregnancy-related lumbopelvic pain (LBPP), a significant barrier to prenatal physical activity, I was involved, since 2016, in multiple studies ranging from an integrative review to a randomized controlled trial, to a theoretical model of underlying mechanisms involved in LBPP. Two meta-analyses we published have confirmed the effectiveness of physical exercise in reducing LBPP severity during pregnancy and postpartum. We also translated and validated ***the Pelvic Girdle Questionnaire*** and demonstrated that postpartum physical activity is associated with reduced functional disability.

For my list of publication: Stephanie-May Ruchat (PubMed)

Funding

Individual grants and team grants as PI: **308 797$**

2019-2023 Research chair in Physical activity and maternal and neonatal health. UQTR: **75 000$**

2015-2016 Institutional Research Fund – young researcher. UQTR: **18 965$**
Effects of assisted reproductive technology on maternal and foetal health.

2024-2027 FRQS TRANSFORMATION Program: **10,000$** awarded for preparing the full grant application due December 2025. TRANSFORMATION is a research grant program aimed at enabling cities, municipalities, and community organizations in Quebec to positively influence the health of their populations.

2024–2025 Start-up grant. UQTR: **3 000$**
Feasibility Study of Mon bébé, Mon cœur, a Cardiovascular Health Initiative for Postpartum Women with Pregnancy-Related Cardiovascular Risk Indicators.

2023–2024 Start-up grant. RISUQ: **15 000$**
Strengthening Research Within the RISUQ Intersectoral Chair in Family Health: Promoting and Mobilizing Knowledge

2019–2024 Operating grant. Fondation Santé Trois-Rivières, Diabète Québec, UQTR : **44 370$**
Development of a Mobile Application for Promoting Physical Activity and Glycemic Control Among Women with Gestational Diabetes

2019–2021 Operating grant. REPAR and UQTR: **25 000$**
Impact of a Motor Control Exercise Program for Pregnant Women with Lumbopelvic Pain: A Randomized Feasibility Trial

2018–2024 Start-up grant. UQTR: **2 700$**
Beliefs Associated with Regular Physical Activity among Pregnant Women

2015–2018 Start-up grant. UQTR and CIUSSS MCQ: **5 000$**
Knowledge about Fertility and Links to Infertility Risk Factors and Health Behaviors Affecting Reproductive Success

2015–2018 Knowledge Synthesis grant, CIHR: **100 000$**
Evidence-Based Update to the Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines for Exercise During Pregnancy: Optimizing Maternal/Fetal Health

2015–2016 Start-up grant. UQTR and CIUSSS MCQ: **19 942$**
Health Profile of Couples Benefiting from the Québec Medically Assisted Reproduction Program: A Pilot Study.

Team grants as co-PI: **5 560 316$**

Participation in Scientific Committees

2024- Scientific committee member and co-lead of the « *Naitre et vivre en santé* » axis, CARES Network
Role: As co-lead of the axis, I serve on the network's scientific committee, which is responsible for overall scientific direction, cohesion, and scholarly engagement. My mandate includes designing and proposing the annual program of activities specific to the axis, such as thematic workshops and specialized lectures

2024- Co-lead of the « Prévention et réadaptation » axis, IRPPS , CIUSSS MCQ
Role: As co-lead of the axis, I am responsible for promoting, developing, and supporting research within the scientific community of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de la Mauricie-et-du-Centre-du-Québec, serving as an ambassador of the IRPPS. I coordinate and lead the scientific activities of the axis

2023- President of the Quebec Association for Physical Activity Sciences
Role: Promote AQSAP across Québec and the Francophone world to position it as a leading association in physical activity sciences.