

NUTRI NEWS

Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health

Winter 2012

Hilary Farmer, Editor

From the Desk of the Director of Administration

Greetings!



It's hard to believe the holidays are right around the corner and harder to believe I have been in my role for one year now. I'd like to extend a hearty thank you to all of you for your support during the transition period. It's been a challenging year

as we work hard to staff the finance office to provide the best service to everyone in the department and the school and we are all faced with having to find ways to do more with fewer resources.

I'd like to remind everyone I have an "open door policy" and no topic is off-limits; please feel free to knock if my door is closed. I am also available if you just want to stop in and say "hi". I'd love to discuss any thoughts as to what's going well and areas needing improvement, so please schedule a meeting with me, e-mail me, or stop by my office.

A big thank-you to everyone for making 2012 another great year in Nutrition!

I wish you and your families an enjoyable holiday season!

Cheers!

Kim Hesse

KUDOS!



Eric Rimm, ScD, Associate Professor in the Departments of Epidemiology and Nutrition, recently won the **HSPH Outstanding Mentor Award 2012**.

This is an honor and a distinction because many other stellar HSPH faculty members were also nominated for this award. Congratulations, Eric!

See Eric's "Ask the Expert" article inside.

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At the Table with Turkey and Tofu: On Being Vegan During the Holidays

by Alyssa Aftosmes

If there is one thing I think a lot of people can relate to, it is this: Food can evoke deep and sentimental feelings, and that emotional connection is all the more palpable during the holiday season. This time of year families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and strangers take time to share meals with one another, meals that can carry a great deal of symbolic meaning: sacrifice, renewal, nostalgia, love, gratitude.

My family is a mix of Irish, Greek and Norwegian descent, so we've endured far more than our share of the usual meat-and-potatoes jokes! It should come as little surprise, therefore, to hear that I am one of only three vegetarians in my entire family (and it also may not surprise you that one of the other two is my sister, who is also vegan). For those unfamiliar with the specifics of veganism, it is worth noting that vegans do not consume or use anything that contains animal products or by-products. This decision to break away from traditional food choices has repercussions for vegans in non-vegan families during family meals over the holidays.

Until the recent transition of my sister to veganism, I stood alone in my quest to replicate beloved family recipes and the feelings those foods evoked for me. In the beginning, this was an alienating process. For example, at holiday dinners a small portion of each vegetable (before they went swimming in various sauces) was held aside for me. Granted, this was a kind gesture, but while everyone else had creamy mashed potatoes and French onion green beans, I had



the un-mashed insides of a potato and some carrots on my plate. I ate these things gratefully, but in some secret space in my heart I felt jilted. I later realized that I felt so badly because I equated the time and effort my mother took to create the meal with the level of care she held for each of us. For those of us who cook and/or bake for our families rather feverishly during the holiday season, this is likely a relatable sentiment—all the sweating and arm cramping from whisking pays off when food is shared and enjoyed; there is satisfaction in knowing that we have nourished others.

My feeling of loneliness that revolved around food has turned into a desire to share my knowledge of flavors with my family, and an excitement to whip up new dishes each year. As I grew more confident in my cooking, my food began making appearances at holiday meals—a side dish here, a dessert there. Eventually, I began baking for people other than my family. When they didn't hate what I'd made, I realized that it was up to me to change the attitude around having a vegan at holiday meals; to show that this was a fruitful addition, rather than an incomprehensible complication.

Being vegan necessitates intimate knowledge of each ingredient that composes what I eat. As a result, I make nearly everything from scratch, right down to the brown sugar I use. No canisters of refrigerated dough, no stuffing from a box. With careful planning, I am able to craft an abbreviated menu for each holiday. I have learned over the years that it behooves me to arrive during Thanksgiving and Christmas ready to go with bags of supplies; whether baking or cooking, I bring everything from soymilk to turmeric. This exercise allows me to actively contribute to our meal, introduce new ideas, and slowly form my own traditions for each festivity.

Alyssa Aftosmes is the Program Coordinator for the Public Health Nutrition program and works with Dr. Kirsten Davison, the Donald and Sue Pritzker Associate Professor of Nutrition. She also assists Dr. Stephanie Smith-Warner on the Vitamin D Pooling Project of Breast and Colorectal Cancer.



ASK THE EXPERT: *ERIC RIMM*

With the holidays in full swing right now, a lot of people like to celebrate them over a nice holiday feast or glass of eggnog. However, some people are afraid to do too much of this because they keep hearing about the evils and dangers of alcohol. In this month's *Ask the Expert* column, we asked Dr. Eric Rimm, ScD, Associate Professor in the Departments of Epidemiology and Nutrition, to explain the risks and benefits of drinking alcohol, especially during the busy holiday season. Dr. Rimm's main research interests include studying



associations between diet and other lifestyle characteristics in relation to risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Editor:

Dr. Rimm, with the holidays now upon us, many people will want to celebrate them in style! For many, this may involve eating and drinking a little more than they probably should. As an investigator who has researched the impact of alcohol on health for 25 years here at HSPH, could you please enlighten some of us as to whether and how much alcohol really is good or bad for us?

Your findings have shown that consuming alcohol in moderation is healthier than either total abstinence or heavy drinking, and in fact moderate drinking actually reduces heart disease risk. On the other hand, people are continually being told by the media and other sources that alcohol is bad for them, and they should avoid it at all costs if they want to remain healthy. Since these mixed messages can become quite confusing for many people, what would you actually suggest?

Dr. Rimm:

Holidays are the times when alcohol stories—good and bad—seem to bubble to the top. The evidence for the benefits of moderate alcohol consumption go beyond just the benefits for lower heart disease risk. Our research groups in the Department have also found benefits of moderate drinking for lower risk of diabetes, gout, high blood pressure, and other chronic conditions. However, alcohol is not for everybody and obviously, at certain times we should not drink at all (e.g. when driving, taking certain medications, or attending faculty meetings!). Seriously, though, there are many people who choose not to drink for good reasons. Sometimes it is because they cannot control their consumption or because they have had a family history of alcohol abuse. For women, some choose not to drink because they have a very strong family history of breast cancer. Cancer is tricky because we have found that women who drink do slightly increase their risk of breast cancer, even with moderate alcohol consumption. However, when you add up all the things that can kill you, a woman's overall risk of dying from any cause is substantially lower if she drinks a drink a day rather than if she abstains or drinks a lot more. Ultimately it needs to be a personal decision that one can discuss with their doctor if they choose so that they can weigh their own risks and benefits.

So what is a person to do, and especially what is one to do during the holidays? I don't like to tell people that alcohol needs to be part of a healthy lifestyle. There have been so many other great things we have discovered in our research in the Department in terms of diet and exercise patterns as they pertain to chronic disease prevention that alcohol should only be there if it is by choice and it brings enjoyment and enrichment to a meal or celebration. For the holidays for many people, a drink or two a day helps them socialize with more comfort at holiday gatherings—and I don't mean just as a coping mechanism for the in-laws! Most adults know their own limits and know when they are close to drinking too much. Plan ahead and tell yourself before you start drinking that you will not arrive at that limit. Our early work in college students and in adults suggested that 5 drinks for men and 4 drinks for women is the standard for "binge" drinking.

However, don't shoot for the limit because everybody is different and it will depend on your age, body size, and tolerance (or usual drinking habits); so for most, the threshold for binge drinking is below these levels. These levels were set because this is when bad and really bad things can start to happen, ranging from behavioral problems like fights and troubles with the police, to arguments with spouses, domestic abuse, and trauma from accidents. I don't want to spoil the fun during the holiday season, though. Most men and women who drink can do so in moderation, and over time they learn as adults how to moderate their drinking and know the signals of excess. So stay within your own personal limits, enjoy with friends, and have a happy, but not too tipsy, holiday season.



Bring Your Green Bean Casserole Up to Date

By Dana Jacobi
for the American Institute for Cancer Research

Green Bean and Mushroom Casserole

Canola oil cooking spray
1 lb. green beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces, or frozen green beans
2 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. canola oil
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
8 oz. white mushrooms, stemmed and cut into 4 to 6 pieces
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. rice or all-purpose wheat flour
1 1/2 cups reduced-fat (2 percent) milk
Salt and ground black pepper
Pinch of cayenne pepper



Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Coat 11-inch x 7-inch (2 quart) baking dish with cooking spray and set aside.

In large pot of boiling water, cook green beans until almost tender, 5 minutes. Drain in colander, and then transfer beans to bowl of ice water. When beans are cool, drain well and spread in prepared baking dish.

Heat 2 teaspoons oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until browned, 8 minutes, stirring often. Scoop onion into small bowl, add panko, and mix with fork to combine well. Set topping aside.

Return pan to medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and cook until they look wet, 2 to 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add garlic and cook until mushrooms are tender, 5 minutes, stirring often. Add mushroom mixture to green beans.

Add remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to pan. Sprinkle flour over oil and cook, using a wooden spoon to stir and scrape mushroom and garlic bits from bottom of pan. Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly, lowering heat as needed to prevent flour from browning. Pour in milk while stirring vigorously. When sauce boils, reduce heat and simmer until spoon leaves a wide path and sauce is thick enough to coat spoon well, 5-7 minutes. Season sauce to taste with salt and pepper, and add cayenne pepper. Add sauce to vegetables, and stir to combine. Then spread in an even layer.

Sprinkle topping over casserole and bake, uncovered, for 10 minutes, or until topping is crunchy and mostly golden brown. Let casserole sit 10 minutes before serving.

Note: If preparing this casserole ahead, do not make topping until just before serving. Cool vegetables in the baking dish, then cover with foil and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. Let casserole sit at room temperature for 20 minutes. Heat it covered, at 350 degrees F., for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, make topping as above. Increase heat to 425 degrees F. and finish baking casserole, uncovered, until topping is crunchy and browned, 10 minutes.

Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 210 calories, 8 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 29 g carbohydrate, 7 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 95 mg sodium.

Something Different is written by Dana Jacobi, author of *12 Best Foods Cookbook* and contributor to the AICR's **New American Plate Cookbook: Recipes for a Healthy Weight and a Healthy Life**.

For this and other healthy and delicious holiday recipes, go to the American Institute for Cancer Research website:

<http://www.aicr.org/health-e-recipes/green-bean-casserole.html>



WELCOME OUR NEW POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW!

Morteza Asgarzadeh has a PhD in Architecture from the University of Tokyo, Japan, and has been working with **Dr. Anne Lusk** and **Dr. Walter Willett** in studying the impacts of the built environment on health, particularly as they relate to bicycling. Due to his research interests on the impacts of the built environment, Dr. Asgarzadeh partners with individuals in public health, transportation, and design to find ways of building safer and more attractive environments for people to live and have meaningful physical activity.



Dr. Asgarzadeh possesses over 10 years of experience in designing and constructing environments and also served as a consultant who conducted research on the properties of built environments. With extensive GIS training, he has studied heat islands in Tokyo. During his PhD program in architecture, he studied the intersection of health, environment, and behavior (i.e., the relationships between human behavior and the natural and built environments) and urban design (the process of designing and shaping cities and towns). For his most recent research, published in the *Journal of Landscape and Urban Planning*, Dr. Asgarzadeh developed a controlled environment

for measuring oppressiveness (a form of environmental stress that poses psychological pressure on urban residents, as experienced in urban environments with high-rise buildings) of different designs of an urban environment. The results showed that, as a building's solid angle (how large a building appears to observers) increased, its oppressiveness perception also significantly increased. For buildings over 30 meters, adding trees sharply mitigated the oppressiveness. For buildings over 60 meters, the trees' positive effect was even more dramatic. These results add to the existing evidence that the built environment may be an additional source of anxiety in an urbanite's day-to-day life—even as much as pressure from work and relationships.

Dr. Asgarzadeh was recently elected by his Post-Doctoral Fellow peers to serve on the HSPH Post-Doctoral Association (PDA) Council. He additionally was appointed as the new PDA Publicity Chair. Dr. Asgarzadeh joins a long list of Post-Doctoral Fellows from the Nutrition Department who have served on the PDA Council in leadership roles!

These other Post-Docs include:

Leah Cahill, General Council Member 2012–2013; Treasurer 2011–2012

Anne Lusk, Anne Lusk, Workshop Chair, 2009–2011

Myriam Afeiche, General Council Member 2012–2013; Social Chair 2011–2012

Amy Lampard, Editor in Chief of the *Postdoc Post* newsletter 2012–2013

Larry De Koning, Social Chair 2010–2011



INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST FACULTY MEMBER!***Majken Jensen, Assistant Professor of Nutrition***

Dr. Jensen has a PhD in Epidemiology from Aarhus University, Denmark. She first visited our department in 2002-2004, when she worked with Drs. Eric Rimm and Ken Mukamal while finishing her master's studies at the University of Copenhagen. Dr. Jensen later returned to the department for her postdoc, again with Eric Rimm, in 2008.

Dr. Jensen's research is primarily focused on lipoproteins, using both genetics and novel subclassifications to further the understanding of their association with risk of cardiovascular disease. She has also worked on other biomarkers and has collaborated with bioinformaticians to complement various genomewide studies by data-integration with publicly available protein interaction databases.

Let's all welcome her to the Department in her new role as faculty!

**RECENT NUTRITION GRANT AND FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

The following members of the Nutrition Department were recently awarded grants and fellowships:

Alberto Ascherio, PI. Prospective study of statin, coffee consumption, dietary antioxidants and risk of ALS. Sponsor: ALS Therapy Alliance, Inc.

Walter Willett, PI. Stage of life, diet, ethnicity: Clues to breast cancer risk. Sponsor: The Breast Cancer Research Foundation

Eric Rimm, Co-PI; Juliana Cohen, Co-Investigator/Project Director. NOURISH (Nutrition Opportunities to Understand Reforms Involving Student Health) Study examining the impact of Massachusetts's Competitive Food Bill on students' diets, product availability/reformulation, and school finances. This study is in collaboration with the MA Dept. of Public Health, Brandeis University, and Northeastern University. Sponsor: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Eating Research Award.

Frank Hu, mentor; and Shilpa Bhupathiraju, fellow. Variety in fruit and vegetable intake and risk of cardiovascular disease. Sponsor: American Heart Association.

MORE NEW FACES

We are pleased to announce that several new staff have recently joined the Nutrition Department:



Hansine Heggeness is a lab technician for the Men's Lifestyle Validation Study who will be working on processing the blood and urine kits for the study. Hansine graduated from Wesleyan University this past May where she double-majored in biology and neuroscience.

Vidya Bhavani Viswanathan is working part-time as Website Coordinator for the Asian Diabetes Prevention Initiative with Dr. Lilian Cheung in collaboration with the National University of Singapore's School of Public Health in creating a new diabetes prevention website tailored towards an Asian audience. Originally from Long Island, New York, Vidya graduated from Harvard College in 2011 and spent one year as a Fulbright fellow teaching English in Taiwan before starting work here in September.



Brandi Negron just started working in the Nutrition Finance Department on December 3, 2012 as a senior grant manager. Brandi brings many years of research administration experience from Harvard Medical School to the department. Her new portfolio with us is yet to be determined.



Food for Thought!?

Chocolate is derived from cocoa beans. A bean is a vegetable.
Sugar is derived from either sugar cane or sugar beets.
Both are plants, which places them in the vegetable category.
Thus, chocolate is a vegetable.

Happy Holidays!



Meet the Lifestyle Validation Study Teams

by Hilary Farmer



Left to right: Laura Kent, Olga Provost, Kristie Antonitto, Jessica Parlon, Junaidah Barnett, Brenna Murphy, Maria Petkova, Sean Sinnott, Candice Chihorek, Stefanie Dean, Elizabeth Marble, Kate Clowry, and Andrea Chomistek

Interviewing the various members of the LVS studies was a very powerful learning experience for me, and I was very impressed with how many bright, enthusiastic, and talented individuals there are in the Nutrition Department. All of these LVS superstars are dedicated to the project, with the overwhelming thread weaving throughout all of the interviews I conducted being how well they enjoy working with each other because each person pitches in and pulls his/her own weight for the team.

Most people in the Nutrition Department know all about the famous Nurses' Health Studies and Health Professionals Follow-up Study and the giant contributions both have made to our present understanding of men's and women's health and certain diseases. But how many of you are aware of two highly unique and important substudies of these cohorts designed to measure diet and physical activity? These substudies are the Nurses' Health Studies I & II Lifestyle Validation Study (WLVS), with 760 women participants, and the Men's Lifestyle Validation Study (MLVS), with 499 men enrolled

from the HPFS and another 194 men from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care.

The PIs (Walter Willett, Meir Stampfer, and Eric Rimm) are attempting to determine the best way to measure diet and physical activity in large cohorts. In the past, investigators have relied on two main types of data measurement: 1) subjective reporting of diet (using the FFQ) and physical activity (using the PAQ), and 2) analysis of biological samples as biomarkers of dietary intake. By evaluating the measurement validity of these two data collection methods, the scientific community can better learn how diet and physical activity impact our health. In other words, do both of them measure the same thing? Are findings using these methods consistent? How can we tell?

Because many measurement tools for diet and physical activity require highly detailed, meticulous procedures, WLVS and MLVS promise to be two of the most complex studies ever undertaken in these cohorts. Both are conducted primarily by internet and through

regular mail, supplemented by regular telephone support from Study Contacts (SCs). Keeping track of participants is very complex because each one is asked to complete an impressive list of study activities including food frequency and physical activity questionnaires (at least twice; one year apart), online 24-hr recalls for diet and physical activity (four times; once every 3 months), 7-day dietary records, and use of accelerometers to measure daily activity (twice; 6 months apart), DEXA and Resting Metabolic Rate assessments, and DLW procedures (once; with a subset of participants doing these twice). All of this is in addition to submitting blood and saliva samples (twice; once every 6 months), and urine (four times; once every 3 months) samples! Each task must be timed very precisely for each participant and be performed in a certain order. Thus, each participant is monitored by both the Harvard Automated Information System (HARIS) and the SCs to ensure that data submission is consistent with the defined schedule of activities.

So just how is all of this going to work, you might ask yourself? Perhaps the best way to think about this is to picture a nice, smoothly-running, very precise, Swiss watch in which all the parts work seamlessly together, yet each part still retains its own special properties and functions to keep the watch ticking. For example, participants use HARIS throughout their 1-year participation, which contains instructions and links to other websites where data is entered. Participants can also track their progress throughout the study and inform the researchers when study materials were received and certain tasks were completed. If SCs cannot confirm that the study events have been completed as scheduled, they contact the participants directly by phone and/or email to resolve any issues and get things back on track.

Let's now take a little tour through our Swiss watch and meet the LVS study team:

The Director and Co-Investigator is **Junaidah Barnett**, PhD, MCH(N). Dr. Barnett oversees the overall workings of the project. She works closely with all parties involved, including study PIs, Co-

Investigators (both at Harvard and at outside institutions including NCI, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, and Tufts University (5 laboratories), outside service providers such as Aumtech, Therapak, Quest Diagnostics and Harvard Vanguard, as well as the Study Data Manager and Programmer, Research Study Manager, Senior Research Assistant, Senior Research Dietitian, and Lab Manager, among others, to ensure the smooth running of every aspect of MLVS according to defined protocols. Junaidah takes all feedback seriously and works closely with her team and all relevant parties to ensure that problems are resolved as soon as possible, and all study needs are fully met.

Kate Clowry is the Research Study Manager, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the project working with study staff and representatives from collaborating institutions and service providers, while supporting 36 participants throughout their involvement. Kate and the SCs recruit and enroll participants, answer questions, and provide guidance to ensure timely and accurate data collection. Kate also plays an important role in the development of HARIS, study materials, and providing feedback received to improve study processes. She brings a strong research background to LVS with her MS in clinical nutrition, certification as a Registered Dietitian, and over 6 years of nutrition research experience. Noting the unique structure of LVS, Kate is excited by the challenge of trying to work remotely with participants, as contrasted with her previous experience in which she had more face-to-face contact with them.

Elizabeth Caton Marble has a degree in nutrition from Simmons College. Elizabeth spends half of her time working as an SC, and the other half as the "administrative go-to" person for the study, where she functions as the "glue" that holds the project together. In addition to her SC duties, Elizabeth orders supplies, keeps track of inventory, handles packing, shipping, data collection materials, and coordinates mass mailings. However, if her new name throws you off a little, it's because she just got married!

Maria Petkova is a full-time SC, who also has a nutrition degree from Simmons and has been with the study for 2 years. Like her teammates, Maria also tracks 165 participants to make sure their timed sequence activities stay on-track. Much of her work involves maintaining each of their calendars, tracking their progress, and frequent telephone contact, as she assists each participant through the process. This is no easy feat, as some of the SCs have noted, since considerable evening and weekend work is often involved to accommodate different time zones and the like.

Kristie Antonitto has been with the study as an SC right from the beginning! Before joining the LVS team, she interned at the Cleveland Clinic, which involved working on a project at the Natick Army Research Center. Like so many other bright go-getters in the Nutrition Department, Kristie brought a very interesting background to the team with 8 years of experience in news photography. Her journalism background proved to be a boon, as Kristie helped develop the instructional DVD for both LVS studies. Kristie recently became engaged, and is also working towards an ALM (master's) degree in biology at the Harvard Extension School.

Brenna Murphy is also a full-time SC, and has been here since January 2010. After she received her BS in nutrition from UNH, Brenna worked as a nutritionist and diet educator for the WIC program in Western Mass. Brenna is very proud that she and her teammates have all been together since the beginning of the study and has found this to be great for team-building and cross-coverage.

Olga Provost, Senior Research Assistant, was hired to work on the Men's Lifestyle Validation Study in November 2010. In this position Olga has been responsible for the Study Human Subjects Protection Approvals and developing the study protocol, consent forms, and other study materials. Before joining the MLVS team, Olga worked for 4 years as an Administrative

Team Leader on the Nurses' Health Study Project conducted by Brigham & Women's Hospital. Olga received her Bachelors degree in international economics, management and finance at the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University in St. Petersburg, Russia, and is now working on her Master's degree in management at the Harvard Extension School.

Stef Dean has been with the team for over 2 years. When she is not fulfilling her responsibilities as a half-time SC, she works with the Senior Research Dietitian, **Laura Kent**, to provide quality control for the 7-day diet record data processing. Similar to her colleagues, Stef has a diverse educational background holding an MPH from the University of Michigan in human nutrition/dietetics, a BS in biology with a minor in environmental science from the University of North Carolina, and certification as a Registered Dietitian. Prior to this position, Stef worked as a WIC Nutritionist with the Moore County WIC Department in Carthage, North Carolina.

Sean Sinnott is the Programmer and Data Manager, and has been with the study since March 2010. Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Sean moved to Boston specifically to take this job! Sean plays an instrumental role in making sure that HARIS works as it should by performing exhaustive testings of various HARIS features for both SCs and participants. Although monitoring incoming data from so many participants can be difficult, Sean has happily risen to the challenge by designing and developing a software system for real-time data tracking which supplements HARIS to ensure follow-up on all missing incoming data (e.g., both paper and online study questionnaires and samples). He proudly describes his operation as a system of "moving parts" which all fit seamlessly together. Sean plays the critical role of providing support and meeting the needs of SCs and other study staff, collaborators, and outside vendors. He comes from a very academic family, and remains in close touch in Boston with his sister who is an HSPH student in biostatistics.

Helene Cyr is a part-time SC for the MLVS study and works from home, as she is responsible for following up with those participants who need late afternoon and evening calls to instruct them on how to complete their 7-day food records. Helen has recently retired from MIT, where she worked as a research dietitian for the past 30 years. This background has lent Helen considerable familiarity with many participant activities, such as DEXA scans or RMR (resting metabolic rate).

Like many other people I interviewed on the LVS team, Helene's story is an interesting one. She sees food as a good vehicle for conversation to gain a better glimpse into her participants' lives. Helene greatly enjoys her participants' stories, especially those regaled from the older men in the study, as many of their experiences with food expose other aspects of their lives. For example, reviewing specific food entries often leads to further conversations such as the one with a man on the Cape who reported eating a striped bass for dinner that he caught hours before from his boat, or the man who made clam chowder after digging his own quahogs, or the man who didn't know the % fat in his ground beef because he slaughters his own cattle. Then there was the man who missed his instruction call because he was busy sailing in the upper Michigan Peninsula and went on to describe the many varieties of tomatoes he grows in his garden. Like so many of our other LVS heroes, Helene is honored to be part of this study because it shows how something as simple as eating and preparing foods unites us all.

The MLVS Lab at HSPH

The MLVS also has its own lab. Biological samples collected by the participants (either spot urine/24 hour urine, spot urine/24 hour urine/saliva/blood, or stool/saliva, depending on which phase of the study they are in) are sent to the HSPH lab to be processed.

Urine, saliva, and stool samples are divided (aliquoted) into smaller storage vials, while blood is centrifuged into plasma, white blood cell, and red blood cell components before being stored.

The aliquots are then placed in liquid nitrogen freezers and assorted for various uses (e.g., sent to the NCI, shipped to collaborating laboratories for immediate assaying, or stored in liquid nitrogen freezers for future use in the Nurses' Health Study or Health Professionals Follow-up Study cohorts). The lab team and the SCs remain in close contact to ensure a timely and top-quality sample collection; if a participant's samples do not arrive by the expected date, or arrive in less than optimal condition, the lab alerts the SCs, who follow up with the participant.

The lab team is comprised of 3 members:

Candice Chihorek is the Project Manager for biospecimen collections.

Candice became interested in the Nurses' Health Studies and Health Professionals Follow-up Study while studying nutrition at Simmons College and has been a member of the NHS/HPFS Blood Lab for many years. She joined the MLVS team a year ago to work on the specimen collection. Just prior to joining the MLVS team, Candice managed the NHS2 specimen collection.

Abigail Jensen is a Research Assistant, and is a relative newcomer who has only been working on the biospecimen collection for 6 months. Fresh out of college, Abby graduated from the University of Michigan before coming to Boston for her first job.

Hansine Heggeness is the newest member of MLVS. Hansine is also a Research Assistant and works with Candice and Abby on processing the study's blood and urine kits. She graduated from Wesleyan University this past May where she double-majored in biology and neuroscience.



➤ *(Editor's Note:* Laura Kent, Senior Research Dietetic Coordinator, has contributed a major effort to the LVS and MLVS studies. However, because her contribution to these and other studies in the Nutrition Department has had such an important impact, Laura and her team will be featured separately in a later issue of *NutriNews*.)



History of HSPH Research Scientist Track

by Debbie Mattina

Office of Faculty Affairs

In 1998, HSPH created the Research Scientist track to provide a career path for researchers who contribute to long-term research projects, and thus improve the School's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified researchers. The specific gap that this track was intended to fill was the need for doctoral level researchers participating in long-term, large-scale, or multidisciplinary research, especially with substantial management of oversight responsibilities. Typically, such research and oversight responsibilities would preclude participation in teaching and other faculty duties.

The Research Scientist track is a non-faculty career pathway comprising three levels: Research Scientist, Senior Research Scientist, and Principal Research Scientist. Research Scientists and Senior Research Scientists are appointed for three-year terms; Principal Research Scientists are appointed for five-year terms. All appointments can be renewed without limit.

The Research Scientist Review Committee is comprised of one member from each of the three disciplinary clusters (biological, quantitative, social/policy), and is appointed by the Dean. The current members are Janet Andersen, Jeffrey Fredberg (chair), and Steve Gortmaker. This Committee reviews all recommendations for Research Scientist appointments and promotions.

The track began in 1998 with 18 research scientist appointments, mostly in the Department of Biostatistics. Since that time the number of appointments has grown slowly but steadily, with the total now at 86 appointments spread across all 9 academic departments and three centers.

Debbie Mattina is the Assistant Director of Faculty Affairs for Postdoctoral and Research Appointments in the HSPH Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA).

NUTRITION FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION ROLES

by Kim Hesse

This description of administrative roles is an overview; for any specific questions, please feel free to contact any of us.

Kimberly (Kim) Hesse
Director of Administration

617-432-0760 (khesse@hsph.harvard.edu)

- Overall leadership for Finance & Administration
- Financial oversight and budgeting
- Strategic collaboration with Chair & faculty
- Manage all Nutrition endowment and gift accounts
- Departmental representative for HSPH and the University
- Departmental & institutional signing authority for proposals
- Manage Nutrition Department training grant

Colleen Bertrand
Assistant Director of Administration

617-432-1851 (cbertra@hsph.harvard.edu)

- Manage administrative issues (hiring & re-class paperwork, payroll, personnel issues, etc.)
- Supervise Department Coordinator and Academic Coordinator
- Strategic space planning with Director and Chair
- Strategic academic planning with faculty
- Student support
- Peoplesoft time approval for Department

Katrina Soriano
Assistant Director of Finance

617-432-4654 (kwright@hsph.harvard.edu)

- Manage Finance staff
- Mentor and train all finance staff
- Prepare/review proposals
- Advise faculty on various issues related to sponsored funding, compliance, etc.
- Review & approve all financial transaction items (invoices, travel, journals, costing)
- Monitor finance office for compliance



FROM THE EDITOR:

I want to thank the people who directly contributed to this issue:

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Email Hilary Farmer (hfarmer@hsph.harvard.edu) with any comments, corrections, or suggestions for future issues.

