



NUTRI NEWS

The Department of Nutrition

October 2019

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White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health Celebrates its 50th Anniversary



This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health. Commissioned by President Richard Nixon and chaired by Dr. Jean Mayer, a professor at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health who would go on to become the president of Tufts University, where he founded its School of Nutrition, this conference sparked crucial progress in US food and nutrition policy, focusing on hunger, changing the national landscape, and conversation.

Since then, our food system and associated challenges have changed dramatically. We now face an underappreciated nutrition crisis marked by obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases, rising healthcare costs, continuing food insecurity and growing disparities, and challenges to sustainability.

To honor the 50th Anniversary of this landmark conference and also to look ahead to the current challenges and potential solutions, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy at Tufts University and the Nutrition Department at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health hosted an anniversary symposium on October 3rd and 4th.

Dr Cathie Woteki, Professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Iowa State University, delivered the first day's keynote at the Harvard Chan School in which she outlined the work of the White House Conference and its lasting influence. Woteki noted, however, that the conference still has an unfinished agenda—some 200 of its recommendations were not implemented, including the development of a national policy on nutrition education.



Next, **Dr Frank Hu**, Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, remarked on the timeliness of the panel discussion on developing food guidance for health and sustainability, given the release earlier in the week of controversial new “dietary recommendations” on red meat by a self-appointed panel. These new guidelines which suggest that it is okay for adults to continue consuming red meat at current high levels run counter to a large body of scientific evidence, according to Hu and the other panelists. Further, the methodology that produced them was problematic.

Dr Walter Willett, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, spoke about his experience as co-chair of The *EAT-Lancet* Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. This report was released earlier this year, and it recommended shifting toward largely plant-based diets for human and planetary health.

Finally, **Dean Michelle Williams**, in a call to action to the audience, asked them to use this event as a step towards achieving a vision for addressing current challenges in nutrition and health, such as obesity, disparities, and sustainability, in the spirit of the White House Conference.

The conference organizers plan to release a special joint report in the coming months with food and nutrition policy recommendations for 2020 and beyond.

Adapted from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/50th-anniversary-white-house-nutrition-conference/>



NEWS FROM AROUND THE NUTRITION DEPARTMENT

AWARDS AND HONORS

Dr Andrea Lopez-Cepero has been selected by El Mundo Boston as one of the 2019 *Latino 30 under 30* honorees for her outstanding work and dedication. The award honors Latino excellence in its highest form. Andrea is a postdoctoral fellow in the Nutrition Department at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Her work focuses on understanding how stress and eating behaviors may contribute to chronic diseases in Latinos. The awards ceremony will be on November 9th. (**For more information:** <https://www.latino30under30.com/>)

GRANTS

Dr Daniel (Dong) Wang, Research Scientist, was recently awarded a Pilot & Feasibility Grant by the NIH-funded Boston Nutrition Obesity Research Center. His project title is "Mediterranean Diet, Gut Microbiome and Cardiac Structure and Function". This project integrates fecal metabolomics and gut microbiome into the framework of nutritional epidemiology to elucidate novel pathways to the development of heart failure. In this 2-year project, Dr. Wang will collect essential pilot data to support his future grant applications with a focus on the dietary preventions of heart failure.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Dr Sheila Isanaka, Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Global Health, has published the following viewpoint in *Lancet* based on some recent work from a global working group that she has been closely involved with over the last several years.

Wells JCK, Briend A, Boyd EM, Berkely JA, Hall A, **Isanaka S**, Webb P, Khara T, Dolan C. Beyond wasted and stunted-a major shift to fight child undernutrition. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2019 Nov;3(11):831-834. doi: 10.1016/S2352-4642(19)30244-5. Epub 2019 Sep 11. Review.

Dr Christopher Golden, Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Planetary Health, has published a paper in *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. This paper is important because it highlights how dams are being used around the world to shift the flow, direction, and volume of freshwater for human uses. Dams provide energy and irrigation water, but also alter natural water flows that support fisheries. This tradeoff presents a risk for human nutrition in regions dependent on aquatic foods, including the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB), where over 100 dams are planned or in construction. Damming the Mekong River for water and energy has significant downstream effects on human health, creating a potential new risk of 2 million nutrient deficient people in the Lower Mekong Basin.

Golden C et al. (2019). Impacts of Hydropower Development on Fisheries and Human Nutrition in the Lower Mekong. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 3, 93.

*** * * COMING SOON! * * ***

Dr Christopher P Duggan, Professor and Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, is pleased to announce that AJCN will be expanding its scope even further by adding several new sections in the journal. More details will appear in the December issue of *NutriNews*!

New Faculty Appointments

Iris Shai, PhD, has been appointed Adjunct Professor of Nutrition. Dr Shai is currently professor of nutrition at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. She has served as PI of several important nutrition intervention trials including DIRECT, CASCADE, CENTRAL, and DIRECT PLUS. Dr. Shai will develop a winter course on **Dietary intervention trials – clinical insights and nutritional omics**. At the end of this course, the students will deepen their knowledge in various aspects of dietary intervention trials including study design, subject recruitments, dietary compliance, and outcome assessments. The students will further learn novel omics analytic methods in nutrition research through hands-on experiences.

MONDAY NUTRITION SEMINARS

The Department of Nutrition holds its weekly **Monday Nutrition Seminar Series** every Monday throughout the academic year. The talks are varied, but they highlight the many different aspects of cutting-edge research that is currently being conducted in the fields of nutrition and global public health. These seminars are held from **1:00-1:20 pm in Kresge 502** at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The seminars are free and open to the public.

The following speakers will present their work in November:

- Nov 4:** **Dr Jean-Philippe Drouin-Chartier**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Nutrition – *"Consumption of total and subtypes of dairy products and long-term health outcomes"*.
- Nov 11:** **VETERANS DAY – NO MONDAY NUTRITION SEMINAR**
- Nov 18:** **Dr Christopher Gardner**, Director of Nutrition Studies at Stanford Prevention Research Center, Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, Stanford University – TBD.
- Nov 25:** **Dr William N. Ryerson**, President, Population Media Center, University of Colorado, Boulder – *"Using Entertainment Media to Address Nutrition and Public Health Issues Worldwide"*.

For more information, contact: hfarmer@hsph.harvard.edu

New Faces in the Department!



Alejandra Contreras-Manzano
Fulbright Visiting Researcher

Alejandra is a nutritionist from México City. She obtained her MSc. in Nutrition from the School of Public Health of México and is now in her fourth year there in a doctoral program in Population Nutrition. Since 2013, Alejandra worked as a researcher at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health (INSP), focusing her research on the development of a proposal of the modification of the Mexican legislature to have warning signs on the front of pack labels for processed products and non-alcoholic beverages. Together with Dr. Simon Barquera, chair of the Research in Nutrition and Health Center of INSP, she participated in negotiations with the public and private sectors for the implementation of the warning

labeling in Mexico.

Last month, Alejandra joined our Department as a Fulbright visiting researcher under the mentorship of **Professor Walter Willett** and **Dr Vasanti Malik** to work on her doctoral project which consists of the estimation at a municipal level of the distribution of the prevalence, mortality and dietary risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes in Mexican adults from 2006 to 2016.

Alejandra's main research interests are policy strategies to improve the food environment and food choices by the population, such as the front of the package's labeling, social programs, and taxes on food and beverages. She is also interested in expanding her research to global nutrition and food policies.

In the personal area Alejandra is vegetarian and likes meditation and exercise. She also loves to travel, animals and to dance all kinds of music, although her favorites are Latin rhythms. If you would like to join Ale and her friends dancing, you can contact her at her Twitter account: @alexacont87

Giorgia Grisotto
Visiting Graduate Student

Although I'm Italian, I live in Switzerland (Bern) where I began my PhD program at ISPM (Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine) 9 months ago. I'm a biologist (University of Padua-Italy) with a master's degree in Science of Human Nutrition (University San Raffaele – Milan, Italy). The aim of my project is to assess the role of diet on menopausal transition. During my time (6 months) at Harvard University, I will develop a study about 'Associations of plant-based diet and dietary iron intake with age at natural menopause'. My mentor here is **Professor Frank Hu**, but for this project I will also collaborate with **Professor Heather A Eliassen**.



Haiyang Bian
Visiting Graduate Student

My name is Haiyang Bian. I am a one-year visiting student from China and will perform ongoing work regarding nutrition and human fertility under **Professor Jorge Chavarro's** supervision. I am also completing a PhD degree in epidemiology and biostatistics at Peking University. Just as I have a strong interest in nutrition and health, I like gourmet food and cooking as well. I look forward to working with everybody at HSPH and becoming good friends!



Yi Wan
Postdoctoral Fellow

Yi received her PhD in Food Science and Nutrition from Zhejiang University in China. During her graduate studies, her research focused on the impact of dietary intakes on cardiometabolic health and gut microbiota using omics approach (circulating metabolomics-gut microbiome-host genome). Yi conducted a 6-month randomized controlled-feeding trial that provided 307 participants with all the foods during the intervention period to evaluate the effects of diets with different dietary fat content on cardiometabolic risk factors, circulating proinflammatory profiles, gut microbiota and microbial metabolites as a primary researcher. As a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Nutrition, she will work with **Dr. Walter Willett** and **Dr. Edward Giovannucci** on a series of research projects focused on the diet and risk of T2D, CVD, and colorectal cancers. In her spare time, Yi loves traveling, dancing and playing the Chinese traditional instrument erhu.

MORE NUTRITION NEWS



Brett Otis, Dr Lilian Cheung, Nancy Oliveira

On Saturday, September 28th, the Nutrition Source team spent the day at the *Let's Talk About Food festival*, which took place from 10:30am-4:30pm on the Plaza at the Harvard Science Center in Cambridge, MA. *Let's Talk About Food*, which is an annual event, is a fun-filled and inspiring day of cooking, demonstrations, hands-on skills and tastings, innovations and explorations.



NUTRITION SOURCE UPDATES

Tips for dealing with sugary leftovers

While one night of extra sweetness is not the main problem, Halloween candy often lingers well beyond the holiday. Here are five quick tips for managing sugary leftovers.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2018/10/29/dealing-with-sugary-halloween-leftovers/>

Flawed recommendations

New “guidelines” say continue red meat consumption habits, but recommendations contradict evidence

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2019/09/30/flawed-guidelines-red-processed-meat/>

Spotlight on magnesium

Learn about this mineral which plays an important role in assisting over 300 enzymes carry out various chemical reactions in the body. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/magnesium/>

CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

The Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) is requesting proposals for educational sessions at the 2020 Annual Nutrition Conference & Expo.

MAND is looking for polished speakers who will provide high-quality and evidence-based sessions. Session content should be based on the latest research with practical applications related to clinical, community, food service, education, public policy, consulting, and professional communication.

The conference will take place on Friday, April 3, 2020.

Please visit the MAND website to download the application: <https://www.eatrightma.org/event/1121>


All applications are due by Friday, November 8, 2019 via e-mail to: nicolette.maggiolo@gmail.com

15th Annual Stare-Hegsted Lecture
Department of Nutrition


**Dietary Guidelines and
Sustainability: Politics,
Policies, and Practice**

Miriam E. Nelson, Ph.D.

Miriam E. Nelson, Ph.D., is professor emerita at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Most recently, she was president of Hampshire College and before that the director of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. At the Friedman School she was the founding director of the John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention. Dr. Nelson also served on the 2010 and 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees.



Thursday, November 14, 2019
4:00-5:30 p.m.
Kresge Cafeteria



Save The Date

The Nutrition Holiday Party will be on Friday,
December 13th, 2019

