

NUTRI NEWS

The Department of Nutrition

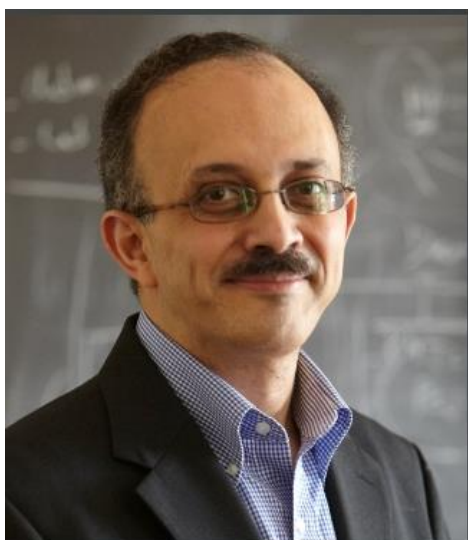
October, 2022

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NEWS IN THE DEPARTMENT

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dr Wafaie Fawzi Elected to National Academy of Medicine



Dr Wafaie Fawzi, Richard Saltonstall Professor of Population Sciences, and Professor of Nutrition, Epidemiology, and Global Health, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). Membership is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievements and commitment to service.

Fawzi was chosen for making outstanding contributions to advancing the science of safety and efficacy of nutritional interventions in the prevention and management of major global health threats, for spurring translation of evidence into policy and programs, and for leading major efforts to train future public health leaders.

Fawzi has focused on interventions to enhance maternal health and child health and development, particularly in developing countries in Africa and Asia. Over the past 25 years, he has led the design and implementation of more than 30 randomized controlled trials, with an emphasis on nutritional factors, as well as observational studies to understand the broader epidemiology of global health challenges.

NAM is one of three academies that make up the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The National Academies are private, nonprofit institutions that work outside of government to provide objective advice on matters of science, technology, and health.

Excerpted from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/wafaie-fawzi-vikram-patel-john-quackenbush-elected-to-national-academy-of-medicine/>

Miguel Ángel Martínez-González Receives the National Gregorio Marañón Award for Medical Research in Spain



PhotoManuelCastells/

Professor Miguel Ángel Martínez-González, Full Professor of the School of Medicine of the University of Navarra, and Adjunct Professor of Nutrition at HSPH, has been distinguished with the National Gregorio Marañón Award for Medical Research awarded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation, the most important recognition of Spain in the field of scientific research. This award will be recognized in an official ceremony in which the King and Queen of Spain will present the award personally.

These awards distinguish scientists from Spain who are carrying out professional work of international relevance in their respective areas of research and scientific fields. They also recognize research careers that make an exceptional contribution to the advancement of science, to the better knowledge of human beings and their coexistence, to technology transfer and to the progress of humanity.

On this occasion, Professor Martínez-González has been awarded for his unique contributions on the importance of nutrition in preventive medicine and in particular, the role of the Mediterranean diet in primary prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

Since 2013 he has been actively involved, as researcher lead, together with **Dr Frank Hu** (Harvard University), in several NIH-funded projects on cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes evaluating metabolomics in the context of interventions within the PREDIMED trial.

NEW FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Marta Guasch-Ferre, PhD has been appointed as Adjunct Associate Professor of Nutrition.

Ganmaa Davaasambuu, MD, PhD has been reappointed as Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition.

PUBLICATIONS

DOVE recently released a report on the *Real Cost of Beauty Ideals*, which was done in partnership with Harvard STRIPED and Deloitte Access Economics. This is a first-of-its-kind report proving **narrow beauty standards are contributing to a public health crisis that costs the U.S. hundreds of billions of dollars per year**. The report also discusses the impact on body dissatisfaction, including weight-based factors. **Dr Josiemer Mattei**, Donald and Sue Pritzker Associate Professor of Nutrition, is a member of the Harvard STRIPED faculty, and she served on the expert panel for the report.

The Real Cost of Beauty report shows that beauty standards and how we feel about the way we look are **not superficial issues** - in fact, racist and gendered beauty standards cost:

- **\$305B due to body dissatisfaction**
- **\$501B due to appearance-based discrimination** - *based on skin shade & body size*

This report is the most comprehensive assessment ever conducted on the pervasive and damaging impact of beauty standards on the U.S. economy and society. It explores the impact of harmful beauty standards through dual pathways of body dissatisfaction and appearance-based discrimination **that disproportionately impact women and girls starting as early as 10 years old**. The report illuminates the critical need to recognize the harmful nature of beauty ideals and demand systemic change to protect the next generation from their devastating costs (including anxiety, depression, abuse of toxic substances, sometimes suicide and more).

To read the full report, visit: https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/real-cost-ofbeauty.html?utm_source=VanityURL&utm_medium=VanityURL&utm_campaign=RealCostofBeauty&utm_id=RCOB%3f

NEW FACES IN THE NUTRITION DEPARTMENT

The following people have recently joined our Department. Please take a minute to say "hello" to them the next time you see them around!



Mou Yuchan
Visiting Graduate Student

Hello everyone! I am Yuchan Mou, a PhD student from the Department of Epidemiology and the Generation R Study Group at Erasmus Medical Center, The Netherlands. My research focuses on understanding dietary habits, including dietary intake and eating behaviors, and their relationships with child growth and brain development from a population-based perspective. I am here for a four-month research visit (Sep-Dec), and I will be working on the associations of diet quality trajectories with change of BMI over time from adolescence to young adulthood in the GUTS study under the supervision of **Dr Jorge Chavarro**.

Besides having nutrition as my main interest, I have gained a further interest in an exposome study, which is a kind of study integrating many external and internal exposures from different sources continuously over the life course. I believe this kind of study holds a key for us to integrate and advance our knowledge of the environment and health through biological effects. I will be visiting ISGlobal next year to learn more about this concept.

Outside of work, I love cycling with my racing bike, traveling, cooking for myself and friends, and playing board/video games. I have already been in the Department for a month, so feel free to drop by and see if we could have lunch or coffee together! I am looking forward to meeting you all.



Lyrissa Leininger
Research Assistant

I am so excited to begin as a Research Assistant here in the Department of Nutrition! I will be assisting with the Nurses' Health Study 3 and be working under **Drs Jaime Hart, Francine Laden** and **Jorge Chavarro**. I recently graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in Economics with a minor in Biology from the University of California-Davis. I spent my undergraduate degree researching the effects of neighborhood deprivation on heart failure patients. I'm from Southern California and love hiking, gardening and trying new restaurants. This is my first time in Boston and would love to get to know more people and explore the city!



Leticia Bizari
Visiting Graduate Student

I earned my Bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Metabolism at the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil. I completed my Master of Science at USP and I worked as a Clinical Nutritionist at the Hospital das Clínicas of the Faculty of Medicine of Ribeirão Preto.

I have worked as a Nutritionist at USP in Ribeirão Preto since 2012, working in 3 different areas: the university restaurant, day care and supervision of internships in the Nutrition and Metabolism Course. At the same time, I am earning my Doctorate at the same institution, working with data from an obesity outpatient clinic. At Harvard T. H. Chan School I am a visiting researcher, focusing on the relationships between food insecurity, psychosocial determinants and obesity in the PROSPECT cohort, under the supervision of **Professor Josiemer Mattei**. I am passionate about dogs and I really miss my little dog that stayed in Brazil. In my spare time I love walking, being in contact with

nature and listening to music. It is an honor for me to have the opportunity to be at Harvard T. H Chan School with you.



Mario Flores
Postdoctoral Fellow

Mario is a physician-scientist from Mexico who finished his PhD in population health sciences (epidemiology track) at HSPH this past summer. He grew up in southern Mexico in the small town of Las Margaritas, in the state of Chiapas (a place he is very proud of). He attended UNAM medical school in Mexico City and after graduation he worked for 4 years as research scientist at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health where he conducted epidemiological research using data from the Mexican Teachers' Cohort. In the Nutrition Department, Mario will collaborate with **Dr Alberto Ascherio's** neuroepidemiology lab, conducting research on the early detection and prevention of Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders. During his spare time Mario

likes hanging out with friends, cooking, trying new foods and playing soccer.



Matthias on a visit to the Harvard Art Museum

Matthias Henn
Visiting Graduate Student

My name is Matthias and I am a visiting PhD student in the Department of Nutrition for one year working the guidance of **Dr. Frank Hu**. My home university is the University of Navarra in Spain where I studied the Mediterranean diet and obesity in the large interventional trials PREDIMED and PREDIMED-Plus. My major interests here are the role of caffeinated beverages on weight. I have a degree in pharmacy from the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg and a diploma degree in biochemistry from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

I love getting to know other cultures and therefore I am excited to have another stay abroad here in Boston. In my free time, I passionately play the piano and organ, go to classical concerts and like the arts. I love hiking and going for runs to relax.



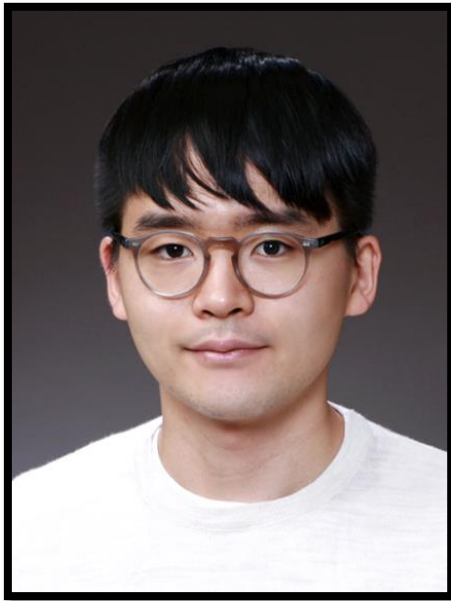
Oladimeji Mudele
Postdoctoral Fellow

My name Oladimeji Mudele. I am a citizen of Nigeria and a Post-Doctoral fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, co-supervised by **Professor Christopher Golden** and **Professor Francesca Domenici**. My current research is within the Madagascar Climate-Smart Public Health project which is focused on understanding the interplay between climate and health outcomes in Madagascar.

I come from a background in Electronic Engineering, Computer Science, and Spatial Epidemiology. I obtained a B.Eng (Hons.) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria, an M.Sc in Electronic Engineering (*summa cum laude*) from the University of Pavia, Italy (2017), and a Ph.D. in Electronic, Computer Science and

Electrical Engineering from the University of Pavia, Italy (2021). My Ph.D. research focused on the development of frameworks integrating multisource satellite image features as input to machine learning and statistical regression methods for modeling and understanding the spread of infectious diseases in urban environments.

In the past, I have received scholarships from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (2017 - 2021) and the German Academic Exchange Fund (2019). In addition, I have been a visiting Ph.D. scholar at the Argentinean Commission for Space Activities, Córdoba, Argentina (2018) and the Institute of Computing of the Federal University of Alagoas, Maceió, Brazil (2019). In 2019, I received the "Premio di Laurea" award as the top international scholar at the University of Pavia, Italy. I speak English, Italian, and Yoruba languages.



Jun Hyung Cha
Visiting Graduate Student

I am Jun Hyung Cha, a graduate student majoring in Bioinformatics/Metagenomics.

I am currently pursuing my PhD degree at Yonsei University, South Korea.

I was born in South Korea and raised there for most of my life. However, I have served my Army duties in U.S Army Post (Camp Humphreys, Pyeongtaek, South Korea).

I will be conducting some collaborative research with **Professor Kyu Ha Lee** during my 1-year period, which will be analyzing a multivariate analysis with microbiome data.

My mentors are **Professor Kyu Ha Lee** and *Professor Insuk Lee*.

MORE NEWS IN THE DEPARTMENT

Does drinking matcha provide certain health benefits?

Matcha, which is a type of powdered green tea, is touted as a superfood for the high amounts of potentially beneficial compounds it contains. Included in these are antioxidants, which are thought to protect against cellular damage and reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.

According to **Dr Frank Hu**, Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology and chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, "there is strong evidence that green tea is a healthy beverage. Given that matcha has the same ingredients, it is probably safe to infer that it is as well, as long as it's consumed on its own without unhealthy extra ingredients."

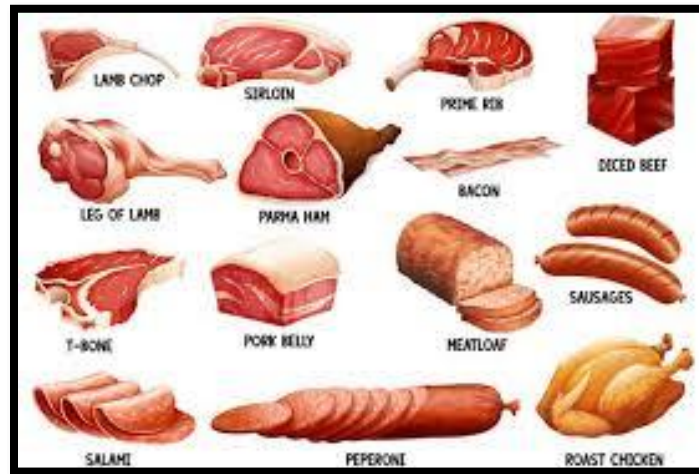
Hu continues, "If you develop a habit of regular matcha consumption, in the long run you may get some health benefits. But if you just sprinkle some matcha powder on top of chocolate ice cream, then I don't think it will do much to help."

From: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/matcha-health-benefits/>

Read New York Times article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/well/eat/matcha-health-benefits.html>

New Ranking System of Evidence for Health Risks of Eating Red Meat, Smoking, and More Causes Controversy

A new set of studies published in *Nature Medicine* attempts to quantify the evidence for the health risks associated with common behaviors, such as smoking, eating red meat, or low vegetable consumption, and assigns each risk-outcome pair a rating of one to five stars based on the strength of the data involved.



unimelb.edu.au

However, the new metric assigned a five-star rating system which differed among links to various outcomes, which could lead to potential confusion. For example, the new ratings *do not* show that eating red meat isn't associated with certain health problems or that eating vegetables does not help protect against them. Rather they suggest the evidence supporting these associations is much less strong than, say, the evidence that smoking causes lung cancer. Low star ratings indicate findings could change as better studies are done and more evidence accumulates, the researchers say.

The findings were part of the Global Burden of Disease study, a more than 30-year-old research project led by IHME and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to quantify the magnitude of all major diseases, risk factors and intermediate clinical outcomes in a standardized way.

But some experts say the findings merely reinforce what was already well known among nutrition scientists: nutrition research is hard to do. Others claim the new rating system wasn't nuanced enough to capture the subtleties of nutritional studies. "The star rating, I think, is a bit simplistic and arbitrary," says **Dr Frank Hu**, a professor and chair of the department of nutrition. "We're not talking about rating hotels or restaurants. The papers' rating system assumes that the differences between studies are the result of uncertainty in the risk relationship itself rather than of meaningful differences between study populations," he says. "But some of the variation in findings on red meat stems from the fact that populations in different countries consume very different amounts: people in Asian countries consume less red meat than Americans, and when they do, it's often a marker of wealth," Hu adds. "This doesn't mean that the heterogeneity or the difference in population is due to uncertainty of the findings," he says.

Hu and some other researchers worry the ratings could be used to cast doubt on dietary advice that, while not incontrovertible, is supported by a wealth of research: namely, that diets high in vegetables and lower in red meat are healthier. In the past, cigarette companies used a doubt-casting strategy to sow uncertainty over the risks of smoking, and some researchers fear the meat industry could use these low star ratings in a similar way.

Taken together, the risk ratings could suggest that existing science simply doesn't tell us much about nutrition. But numerous expert committees have reviewed the research on various food groups and concluded that enough is known for experts to make recommendations. Rather than applying a "burden of proof" approach—in which everything must be conclusively proved beyond any reasonable doubt—Hu says researchers should apply the precautionary principle when there is evidence of harm.

To read entire article: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/new-system-ranks-evidence-for-health-risks-of-eating-red-meat-smoking-and-more-but-critics-say-its-overly-simplistic/>

Harvard Chan expert says tofu is very healthy



Tofu - Wikipedia

Dr Qi Sun, associate professor in the Departments of Nutrition and Epidemiology, states in an October 10 American Heart Association News article that tofu is a "very nutritious food".

Why is tofu so nutritious? According to Sun, "Tofu—a product containing soybeans, water, and a coagulant such as calcium sulfate, that is pressed into a block—is a great source of protein and nutrients." However, tofu and other soy products, which are a primary source of isoflavones, "do not have a consistent positive image in the United States," he acknowledged. The reason for this is because isoflavones function like a weak form of the hormone estrogen, and concerns have arisen that soy can cause infertility or other problems in men. But Sun said there's no scientific basis for the concerns.

In an earlier study Sun found that out of 210,000 U.S. health care professionals, those who ate tofu at least once a week had an 18% lower risk of heart disease compared to their colleagues who rarely ate tofu. "For the vast majority of people, it should be reasonable to incorporate tofu in their daily diet without any issues," Sun said. He noted that his own family eats tofu around three times per week. He added that as long as people avoid preparing tofu with a lot of sugar, salt, or saturated fat, tofu can be "a very healthy food, almost universally."

Read the American Heart Association News Article: <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2022/10/10/clearing-up-questions-on-whether-tofu-is-healthy>

From: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/is-tofu-healthy-yes-says-harvard-chan-expert/>

Even 'healthier' energy drinks may be bad for you, experts warn



Sales of energy drinks have been on the rise again. Many are now featuring new options billed as “healthier” by their marketers. However, experts continue to warn of the harmful effects of the high caffeine and sugar content of these drinks.

For example, **Dr Frank Hu** warns that “Consuming too much of the drinks can result in high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, anxiety, and insomnia, and the drinks are particularly dangerous for adolescents” in an October 4, 2022 *Wall Street Journal* article. Hu also added that sugarless energy drinks aren’t necessarily any safer, because the long-term effects of artificial sweeteners aren’t known.

In fact, “The large increase in consumption over the past couple of years is really concerning,” Hu said.

Read The Wall Street Journal article: https://www.wsj.com/articles/energy-drinks-red-bull-celsius-caffeine-sugar-11664824035?st=vde7ineq7gfmnwo&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

UPDATES FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S DIB COMMITTEE

By Bristian Justice

We hope all are enjoying the fall foliage and new seminars offered through the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging office. The sub-committees are underway and have been setting foundation for future efforts along with coordinating across the department. Engagement opportunities are being offered, and we are very excited to host some events in the near future. Please be sure to check for invitations, and/or future announcements related to NUT-DIB. We do seek feedback and suggestions related to NUT-DIB initiatives. Please do not hesitate to reach to out!

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, planetary nutrition, public health nutrition, and global public health. These seminars are held from **1:00-1:50 pm** and are free and open to the public. Because of COVID-19, most of the seminars have been presented via Zoom since March of 2020. Beginning this fall, our seminars will be in more of a hybrid mix, with some in-person and others still virtual. The in-person seminars will also be on Zoom for those unable to attend. During the

fall semester, live seminars will be held in FXB G-13. Live spring semesters will be in Kresge 502, as they were in past years. A zoom link for viewing will be available one week prior to each seminar.

Our November speakers will be:

- Nov 7** **Professor Michael Zimmermann**, Professor of Human Nutrition at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland, and Visiting Professor at the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine at the University of Oxford - *Using Iron Stable Isotopes to Develop Safe and Effective Oral Iron Supplementation Programs* – NGHP (zoom)
- Nov 14** **Elissa Epel, PhD**, Professor, Psychiatry, UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA – TBD (zoom)
- Nov 21** **Dr Mario Herrero**, Professor, Cornell Global Development; Cornell Atkinson Scholar, Cornell Atkinson Centre for Sustainability; Nancy and Peter Meinig Family Investigator in the Life Sciences College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Cornell University – TBD (hybrid)
- Nov 28** **Dr Gokhan Hotamisligil**, James Stevens Simmons Professor of Genetics and Metabolism, HSPH – TBD

NUTRITION SOURCE UPDATES

Pumpkins: Not just for Halloween

Try smaller varieties of pumpkins baked, mashed, or puréed into soups, and roast the seeds for a crunchy topping or snack. Learn more about cooking with pumpkins and other types of winter squash.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-features/winter-squash/>

Tips for dealing with sugary leftovers

While one night of extra sweetness is not the 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/>

(See: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>)

The Nutrition Department's Picnic was on October 16, 2022 from 11 am to 2 pm at the Larz Anderson Park in Brookline at the BBQ Shelter. The turnout was fantastic, and everyone had a great time and enjoyed the nice weather, delicious food, beautiful foliage, and personal connections!







NEW 1-Week Nutrition Course at HSPH

Integrating Nutrition into Clinical Medicine:

The Role of Health Professionals as Change Agents

Winter Session • Jan 9-13, 2023 • NUT 280

Mon-Thurs 1-3 PM & Friday 1-4 PM at HSPH • 1.25 credits (P/F)

The connection between diet and patient health is unequivocal, yet nutrition-based interventions in medical practice remain significantly underutilized. The aim of this course is to demonstrate the unique potential for physicians and other health care professionals to serve as change agents for effectively integrating nutrition into medical care.

In this course, we will:

Examine the key evidence that links diet to both personal and planetary health.

Review the current status of nutrition education and practice in the United States.

Explore barriers and solutions to greater incorporation of nutrition in medical practice.

Students will learn the foundations of clinical nutrition science and practical strategies for leveraging the role of nutrition in patient care. As a capstone to learning, students will prepare and present a plan for making two interventions: 1) a personal change in one's own diet and; 2) a plan for making a nutrition-focused systems change in their own (or anticipated future) clinical/work environment.



Taught by:

- Stephen Devries, MD

Guest lectures by:

- Walter Willett, MD, DrPH
- Howard Koh, MD
- David Eisenberg, MD

[my.Harvard course link here](#)

Registration begins November 10

17th Annual Stare-Hegsted Lecture

Department of Nutrition

The Intersection of Nutrition Science and Policy – Promoting Accurate Communication

Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc

Dr Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc, is a senior scientist and director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the HNRCA, as well as Stanley N. Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy at the Friedman School, Tufts University. Dr Lichtenstein's general research focus is on assessing the interplay between diet and heart disease risk factors in postmenopausal females and older males.



Monday, November 14, 2018
4:00-5:15 p.m.
FXB G-11, Harvard Chan School

Reception at 5:30 pm, FXB Atrium

