

NUTRI NEWS The Department of Nutrition

December 2023

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The End of Year Holiday Message from Dr Frank Hu



Dear Members of the Nutrition Department:

As 2023 draws to a close, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for your steadfast support and commitment to our department. Our department has continued to advance our educational and research missions. This fall we welcomed 21 new students to our department, 16 new MPH-65 students and 5 new PhD students.

2023 was an exciting year in the Department of Nutrition, as we celebrated the launch of the <u>Thich Nhat</u> <u>Hanh Center for Mindfulness in Public Health</u> in April. The Center was created with a \$25 million gift from an anonymous donor, one of the largest single donations to the School. Based in the Department of Nutrition, the Center's mission is to empower people around the globe to live with purpose, equanimity, and joy through the practice of mindfulness; pursue evidence-based approaches to improve health and well-being through mindfulness; and educate and train the public in mindfulness.

The Department of Nutrition held its <u>9th Annual Omics Symposium: Advances, Applications, and</u> <u>Translation in Nutrition and Epidemiology</u> on June 8, 2023. Co-chaired by *Dr Frank Hu*, Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, and Chair, Department of Nutrition; and **Dr Miguel A. Martinez-Gonzalez**, Adjunct Professor of Nutrition, this was a hybrid event which took place in Kresge G-1 and livestreamed on zoom. The inaugural <u>Women's Health Conference 2023</u>, jointly organized by the <u>Global</u> <u>Centre for Asian Women's Health</u> (GloW) in the National University of Singapore (NUS)'s Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, and the Dept. of Nutrition, HSPH, was held in Singapore from November 9th to 11th.

The Nutrition Research, Culture, and Equity (NURTURE) Program was launched in September 2023, with **Dr Josiemer Mattei**, Donald and Sue Pritzker Associate Professor of Nutrition, as its first faculty Director. The Program is aimed to study nutritional, psychosocial, and cultural determinants of chronic diseases and reduce health disparities in racial/ethnic and minority groups, particularly Latinos in the U.S.

Our faculty, postdocs and students have been widely recognized for their outstanding work. **Drs Edward Giovannucci**, Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, **Deirdre Tobias**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition, and **Teresa Fung**, Adjunct Professor of Nutrition, have been selected as members of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC); **Dr Fred Tabung**, an Associate of the Department of Nutrition, has been appointed by President Biden to the National Cancer Advisory Board. The King and Queen of Spain presented the National Award for Research in Medicine to **Professor Miguel Ángel Martínez-González**, Adjunct Professor of Nutrition, who received the **Gregorio Marañón National Research Award in Medicine** at the ceremony. **Dr Albert Ascherio**, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, is among 46 individuals in life sciences named to the 2023 STATUS List recognized by STAT for their contributions to their fields. **Dr Edward Giovannucci**, Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, has received the American Cancer Society Clinical Research Professor Award, the most prestigious research grants made by the ACS national program. **Dr Walter Willett**, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, was recently made a member of the Academy of Medicine of Athens in recognition of his research on diet and health.

Our students and postdocs have also received honors for their outstanding work. *Zhila Semnani-Azad, PhD,* Postdoctoral Research Fellow, was awarded the Scott Grundy Fellowship Award for Excellence in Metabolism Research at the AHA Epi-Lifestyle 2023 conference; doctoral student *Alan Espinosa's* venture (Kiikter®) was selected as one of the top five startups in the Health & Lifestyle Track within The President's Innovation Challenge. This year's **Simon, Arpi, and Marie Simonian Research Excellence in Nutrition Prize** recipients are *Nour Hammad* and *Cami Christopher* along with their advisors, *Dr Walter Willett, Dr Deirdre Tobias,* and *Dr Heather Eliassen. Kenny Mendoza,* a Ph.D. Candidate in Nutritional Epidemiology, has been selected as the recipient of the **2023 ASN Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship**; Kenny and *Linh Bui* have also been named as a finalist for the **Emerging Leaders in Nutrition Science Poster Competition**. *Linh Bui* has also been named a finalist in the ASN **Graduate Student Research Award Competition**. *Nour Hammad*, Teaching Fellow, has been selected as a 2023-24 APHA Food and Nutrition Section Fellow; and doctoral student **Sarthak Agarwal** was named an Emerging Scholar at the Thirteenth International Conference on Food Studies at the University of Guadalajara in Mexico in October 2023. *Matt Lee*, doctoral candidate working with *Dr Erica Kenney*, received the Food and Nutrition Section Student Award at APHA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA.

Our staff have also been recognized for their achievements. *Amelia Zhang-Gross*, Faculty and Project Coordinator, was selected as the recipient of this year's Winter ACE Award.

Reflecting on 2023, I feel privileged to have worked closely with so many talented and dedicated faculty, staff, and students, and I look forward with enthusiasm to the new year ahead.

Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and joyful holiday season!

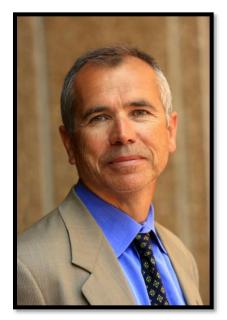
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Frank Hu, MD, PhD Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology Chair, Department of Nutrition

NEWS IN THE DEPARTMENT

HONORS & AWARDS

Professor Alberto Ascherio Has Been Appointed an Honorary Doctor



Dr Alberto Ascherio, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, will receive one of nine highly prestigious honorary doctorates from the University of Bergen, Norway. The honorary doctorates will be awarded at a ceremony to be held in the University Aula on May 24, 2024.

The honorary doctors are appointed by the university board based on proposals from the faculties, in consultation with the rector. The appointed candidates have undertaken outstanding work and made a significant contribution to science and art. An honorary doctorate is the highest honor that the university can give to a person who is not employed at UiB.

Dr Ascherio will be honored for his pioneering contribution to the understanding of the etiology of neurological diseases. His main contribution relates to identifying the causal factors of multiple sclerosis (MS). Dr Ascherio is also an accomplished educator and has contributed to teaching at Harvard for nearly 30 years. For the past 20 years, Dr Ascherio has been a very active partner and supporter of the neuroepidemiology community at UiB. He has supported increased research collaboration between UiB and Harvard. Ascherio is nominated by the Faculty of Medicine.

The first honorary doctorate at the UiB was awarded in 1952. Since the first award, the UiB has now awarded 143 people with the title of honorary doctor. The last time an honorary doctorate was awarded at the UiB was in 2019. Such honorary doctorates are usually awarded to prominent people. Honorary doctorates may also be awarded in recognition of significant lifetime achievements.

From: https://www.uib.no/en/news/167006/new-honorary-doctors-appointed-uib

PRESENTATIONS

Department Associate *Dr Sabri Bromage* (ScD, 2018) attended the **Micronutrient Forum 6th Global Conference** in The Hague, Netherlands, from October 16-20 to give two presentations about an ongoing

three-year Rockefeller-funded project led by Mahidol University in collaboration with Harvard University, Intake Center for Dietary Assessment, and international partners. The work was presented on behalf of the project team which includes Harvard investigators **Drs Walter Willett, Wafaie Fawzi, Christopher Golden, Sheila Isanaka, Nazia Binte Ali, Yanping Li**, and former director of the Harvard Chan Nutritional Biomarker Lab **Dr Jeremy Furtado**. The aim of this project is to strengthen capacity for population surveillance of diet quality and key nutritional biomarkers in low- and middle-income countries.



Left to right: Warangkana Srichamnong and Sabri Bromage at the PTFI CoE Workshop

The first presentation described the team's progress on convening a series of consultations with international experts on recommended nutrient biomarkers, assay methods and instrumentation, and best practices in laboratory infrastructure and management in limited-resource settings to help inform design and decision-making of nutrition resource labs in the Global South, to which **Drs Hannia Campos, Rain Yamamoto** (ScD, 2016), **Anne CC Lee** (Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital), **Gary Bradwin** (Boston Children's Hospital), and numerous other scientists have contributed expertise. The presentation also described how the team is translating knowledge generated from these consultations and a recent stakeholder workshop, hosted by Mahidol University and attended by representatives from 8 Southeast Asian countries, toward the development of a regional nutrient biomarker resource lab and regional biomarker surveillance network.

The second presentation described the team's work on validating a novel software tool for standardized collection of data on the Global Diet Quality Score (GDQS) in Thailand, peer-reviewed results of which were accepted for publication in October and are now in press (*Bromage S, Pongcharoen T, et al,* "*Performance of the Global Diet Quality Score (GDQS) app in predicting nutrient adequacy and metabolic risk factors among Thai adults*", *Journal of Nutrition*). The GDQS metric was previously developed and validated for use in adults by an international team led by investigators from the Department of Nutrition, INSP Mexico, and Intake Center for Dietary Assessment from 2018 to 2021 with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the GDQS is currently being applied in numerous surveys globally. In October, Intake Center for Dietary Assessment also published a platform for visualizing GDQS data in different world regions: <u>https://www.intake.org/visualizations</u>.



Left to right: Warangkana Srichamnong, Nardos Birru (UNICEF), Ramadhani Abdallah Noor, Sabri Bromage, and Endale Amare outside the UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office

As part of the ongoing Rockefeller-funded project, the team is also conducting secondary analysis of data from nine countries to develop GDQS metrics for children and adolescents 2-5, 6-9, and 10-14 years of age. Results of this analysis will be submitted for peer-review early next year.

NEW HEALTHY LIVING GUIDE TO BE RELEASED IN JANUARY!

At the end of every year, the Department's Communications Team (*Dr Lilian Cheung, Brett Otis*, and *Nancy Oliveira*) reviews *The Nutrition Source's* analytics to get a sense of the topics that captured the interest and attention of its visitors. To date, the site has logged over 28 million total pageviews for the year among 19.2 million users—another banner year for site traffic! Below are some quick insights from 2023:

- The <u>Healthy Eating Plate</u> page was once again a top destination, but content on vitamin and minerals continues to see increased interest, most notably <u>vitamin D</u>, <u>potassium</u>, and <u>folate</u>.
- Other pages receiving a notable increase in traffic included <u>artificial/low-calorie sweeteners</u>, processed foods, as well as various diet reviews, food and exercise features—especially the <u>MIND</u> <u>Diet</u>, <u>avocados</u>, and <u>high-intensity interval training</u>.
- We were also able to update many existing articles and publish on a variety of new topics, including a <u>seaweed</u>, <u>Zumba</u>, <u>intuitive eating</u>, guidance on <u>navigating different types of research</u>, and coverage of the WHOs guidelines on <u>non-sugar sweeteners</u> and <u>healthy diets</u>.

Many members of the Nutrition faculty provided their expert input and review throughout the year for *The Nutrition Source*.

The Healthy Living Guide 2023-2024 will be available to the general public in January. Many of the popular topics mentioned above will be featured, along with resources for mindful eating, breathing, and walking from the Thich Nhat Hanh Center for Mindfulness in Public Health.

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. Since Covid-19 our seminars have been a zoom and hybrid mix. Most of this year's talks will be in-person, although some will still be virtual. The in-person seminars will also be on Zoom for those unable to attend. Live seminars will be held in Kresge 502. Zoom link for viewing will be available one week prior to each seminar.

Our Monday Nutrition Seminar speaker for January will be:

- Jan 22 Dr Frank Sacks, Professor of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, HSPH; Professor of Medicine, HMS "Effect of Mediterranean-DASH diet (MIND) on cognition change during aging"
- Jan 29 Dr Sjurdur Olsen, Chief Physician; Senior Scientist, Statens Serum Institut, Copenhagen, Denmark; Adjunct Professor of Nutrition "N-3 fatty acids"

2023 ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY A SMASHING SUCCESS!

























































NUT 280 Jan. 8-12, 2024

Integrating Nutrition into Clinical Medicine: The Role of Health Professionals as Change Agents

Jan. 8-12, 2024 • M-Th 1-3PM, Fr 1-4PM • In-person at HSPH • 1.25 Credits (P/F)

IN THIS COURSE, WE WILL:

- Section 2.1 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.

More info and reviews on my.Harvard

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

NUT 280

NUT 200 Registration begins Nov. 9 on my.Harvard



Technology-driven solutions to advance Precision Medicine

Welcome to Precision Nutrition Forum 2024!

Precision Nutrition Forum 2024 will bring together researchers at all career levels interested in nutrition research and related disciplines to discuss the latest science in precision nutrition.

The conference takes place in the Maersk Tower at the University of Copenhagen on April 16-17, 2024.

A limited number of travel awards are available for early career scientists, PhD students, or postdocs.

For program and registration visit: https://cbmr.ku.dk/events/pnf-2024/

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

2024 Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center Celebration of Early Career Investigators

January 31, 2024 from 1:00-5:00PM

In-Person at Dana Farber Cancer Institute

Do you work in population science, including epidemiology, biostatistics, outcomes, diversity, cancer care delivery research, and early detection? We invite students, postdocs, residents, clinical fellows, and early career faculty to submit abstracts for consideration as a short talk or as part of the PATHFINDER sponsored poster presentation.

Submit your abstract by December 31 https://bit.ly/ECIS2024Abstract



2024 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jeff Leek, PhD, Chief Data Officer, Vice President, and J Orin Edson Foundation Chair of Biostatistics at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center **Registration for the public now open at https://bit.ly/ECIS2024**



CELEBRALLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS