

# The Gazette

WINTER 2023

New Nutrition  
Society Congress

Ultra Processed Foods –  
Why All The Hype?

A Day In The life Of...  
A Lecturer In Human Nutrition



# Be part of the advancement of nutritional science

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## Editorial



**Dr Carrie Ruxton,**  
Honorary Strategic Communications Officer

As I write, I'm anticipating a packed fortnight of nutrition-related meetings. Tomorrow, I'll be at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Nutrition Science followed by the Strategic Communications committee meeting. Next week, I'm off to Belgrade to support Nutrition Society staff at FENS.

This Gazette is packed with activities, meetings, opinions and opportunities that Nutrition Society members, staff and volunteers have brought into being. Whether it's conference round-ups (pages 16-19, 26), updates on ultra-processed foods (page 10) and sweeteners (page 11), a look back at one of our founders (page 6) or news about our Themes (pages 24-25), the range of activities never ceases to amaze me.

Our regular articles from the President, Trustees, CEO and Sections keep you up to date on governance and decision-making. Look out for opportunities to get involved, particularly our new Membership Panel (page 7) and the Nutrition Society Academy (page 23). Hope you enjoy this issue!

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# President's Report

Professor Mary Ward, President

It is with great pleasure that I share my first update as President of The Nutrition Society, having formally taken up the position at this year's Summer Conference in Liverpool in July during the Annual Charity Meeting. It is a particular honour to follow directly in the footsteps of Professor Julie Lovegrove who served as our President for an extended period of four years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Julie most sincerely for the outstanding contribution she made, which included leading the Society through the COVID-19 period, a time which required everyone to move rapidly to a very different way of working. Despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, the Society, under Julie's excellent leadership, continued to serve the membership by delivering the highest quality science via our remote platforms and maintaining, or even increasing our presence in the international arena, through promoting greater engagement with our overseas members. This and numerous other initiatives over the period undoubtedly contributed to the strong position of the Society today and we look forward to continued engagement with Julie in the coming years.

My first official engagement was the very successful summer meeting in Liverpool in July on 'Nutrition at key stages of the lifecycle jointly hosted by Edge Hill, Liverpool Hope and Liverpool John Moores universities, which attracted over 260 delegates. The President of FENS, Professor Philip Calder from the University of



Southampton opened the event to a packed auditorium, with a superb insight into 'Nutrition and Immunity – lessons from COVID-19' reminding us of the vital role of nutrition in supporting immune function and reviewing the latest data linking nutritional status with COVID-19 infection severity. Further highlights of the conference included the Rank Prize lecture which was delivered by Professor Kristina Pentieva from Ulster University on the topical topic of 'B-vitamins during pregnancy' and the Silver Medal Lecture by Dr Ana Rodriguez- Mateos from Kings College London on 'Dietary polyphenols and human health' both of whom were very worthy recipients and delivered superb presentations. I would encourage all of our members to consider the Society's medal and lecture opportunities which enable much greater visibility of your work while recognising excellence and expertise in the field of nutrition research.

A major highlight of this year's calendar is the 14<sup>th</sup> European Nutrition Conference FENS 2023, the flagship European conference that happens every 4 years was held in Belgrade, Serbia, from 14<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> November with Professor Philip Calder as President. With over 1,100 participants registered, 5 plenary talks and 60 scheduled scientific symposia the event offered an excellent opportunity to present and share research findings, hear the latest from global nutrition leaders, attend educational events and network with nutrition scientists from around the world. We were delighted to support a number of students and early career researchers to attend the event and I enjoyed engaging with many of our members at this terrific meeting. This is followed by a busy week at the beginning of December which includes our fourth Honorary Fellows lunch at the RAF Club in London, where we have the pleasure of recognising the significant contribution made by some of our senior members followed by the Senior Lecture and Annual Reception. The Winter Conference will be held over the following two days at the Royal Society on the role of diet and lifestyle strategies in the prevention and management of



multiple morbidities. Looking to 2024, we are looking forward to the annual Irish Postgraduate Conference in Athlone in February and the Scottish conference in April which will focus on Circadian Rhythms in Health and Disease. These will be followed by our new congress-style Summer meeting, to be held in Belfast from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> July. Please check our new look website for further details on this exciting venture.

Finally, I would like to welcome a number of new appointments to key positions within the Society including Emeritus Professor Andy Salter who takes over from Professor Sue Lanham-New as Honorary Secretary and Dr Wendy Hall who takes over from Professor Bernard Corfe as Honorary Programmes Officer. Huge thanks to Sue and Bernard for their very significant contributions and I look forward to working with Andy, Wendy and all of our Trustee and Council members over the coming years.

Professor Mary Ward, President

# A Strategic Plan Update

Mark Hollingsworth, CEO

I was a guest at a dinner in Rome recently and shared my table with leaders from the private and non-profit sectors, diplomats, UN officials. The dinner was part of a UN FAO event to debate security in food systems. During the dinner discussion our host asked us what one issue could make a significant change to enable us to deliver on this issue. One of the guests said, "All I ask for is certainty". I had to take a quick sip of my Chianti to stop my guffaw! Everybody would love certainty – but are we ever going to realistically achieve that? This has made me think about how we can make certainty more of a reality.

A week before this dinner I attended a Society Trustee Meeting, where our Trustees reviewed the mid-term progress of our 5 Year Strategic Plan (launched in July 2021). From that meeting I wanted to share with you some of the successes, and flag some of the ongoing work and challenges, that we face over the next 2 years. Our impact assessments will follow later.

For our conferences we recorded, between August 2021 and October 2023, 2,968 delegates attending from 50+ countries. These are higher numbers than over a comparable pre-covid period. Membership is growing every month since January 2023, showing a total YTD 9.5% increase. The introduction of the Early Career Member category is a success, and is showing the fastest growth area in membership. The number of members volunteering in activities to support the Society is increasing, with waiting lists in a number of key activity areas. The introduction of Special Interest Groups has seen 7 established with now over 200 participants. We have taken, from idea to reality, a unique online subscription model for access to online learning in nutrition science – The Academy. On the policy/influencing front, we have launched the first ever All Party Parliamentary Group for nutrition science in the Houses of Parliament, with cross party support from both Houses. I am conscious of the adage that you should never confuse activity with results – these, I believe, are strong results to be proud of.

Yet, we still have challenges to overcome. Our journals are not ranked as high as we believe their true impact and reputation to be. We continue to face competition from a proliferation of new journals in the nutrition space. This, in turn, is impacting our revenue for which, as a charity, we rely upon to fund our activities. Our Student Section would like to see their conference, Nutrition Futures, improved. Additional focus is needed to support those in the nutrition sector engaged in the 'application' of nutrition science. Finally, we believe there are



opportunities for the Society to help the sector of nutrition science find an impactful place in interdisciplinary settings.

The Nutrition Society, as one of the world's leading nutrition science societies, must continue to evolve to remain relevant. This review of our strategy reassures me that, although we may be in what many might call a transformation period, what we're strategically engaged with at the moment is fundamentally changing the way our Society thinks, the way it responds, and most importantly the way it leads.

I return to my dinner in Rome, and instead of sipping my wine perhaps I should I have responded and said the answer to achieving certainty is to have a successful strategy. Getting it done, getting it done right, and getting it done better than any other organisation or scenario that you may be competing against. Because that is what we are doing!

Mark Hollingsworth, CEO

## Rank Prize for Nutrition - 2024 winners

We are delighted to announce that Professor Roy Taylor and Professor Mike Lean are the winners of the 2024 Rank Prize for Nutrition. Their research has furthered understanding of how type 2 diabetes develops, and has shown for the first time that remission from type 2 diabetes is possible for some by following a low-energy weight management programme. Their research is transforming services for people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes by giving them the support to manage their health and reverse the effects of this serious condition.



# Nutrition Greats

## Sir Joseph Barcroft, Nutrition Society Chairman, 1945-1947



acclimatization to high altitude. This period of his life, with undoubtedly many self-experiments, culminated in the publication of another classic text on the architecture of physiological function (1934). Such was his presence and reputation in the White Mountains in California, 'Mount Barcroft' was named after him, along with the Barcroft Research Centre (3,800m) where the effects of altitude on physiology are still studied today<sup>3</sup>.

His final period of research focused on foetal physiology, including blood volume, placental blood flow, the physiology of the foetal heart, both foetal and maternal haemoglobin, and metabolism and growth *in utero*. This work he brought together in *Researches in Pre-Natal Life*, the first volume of which was published shortly before his death in 1947<sup>4</sup>.

Sir Joseph was instrumental in the creation of the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* and chaired our first Publications Committee on 21 March 1942 which observed this about the Society's new journal:

'In the old days cooking was a domestic affair but in this industrial age home cooking has very frequently to be supplemented and obviously the machinery for this will have to be developed. In this, The Nutrition Society could help and one way is by the publication of its proceedings<sup>1</sup>.'

In 1944, the first issue of *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* was published and we will mark its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024.



Sir Joseph Barcroft's workroom at the Cambridge Physiological Laboratory in the 1940s.

Sir Joseph received many distinctions for his enormous contribution to public life notably fellowship of the Royal Society in 1910 and a knighthood in 1935. As a non-medic, he was proud to have been elected an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1944, a tribute to his research on foetal physiology.

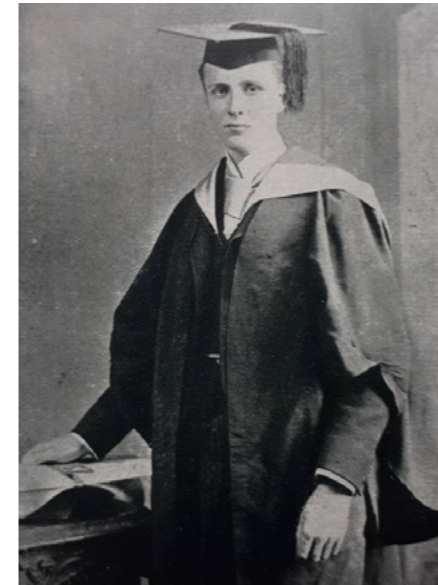
You can read more about Sir Joseph Barcroft in [The Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book](#) and his involvement in the foundation of the Society and its publications in [The History of the Nutrition Society](#) by Alice Copping.

Sir Joseph Barcroft was a world leader in respiratory physiology and, along with Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, helped found The Nutrition Society. In 1941, he was one of the 11 signatories who issued an invitation to eminent scientists at the time who might be interested in forming a nutrition society. At the time of his passing in 1947, he was de facto President (Chairman) of the Society<sup>1</sup>.

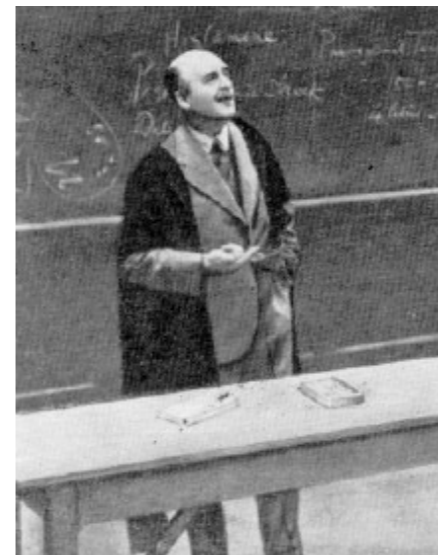
Sir Joseph worked right up to his sudden death at the age of 74 years. He suffered a heart attack after rushing to catch the bus home from his Physiology Laboratory at Cambridge University. Normally, he cycled to and from the lab which encapsulates Sir Joseph's energy and vigour. He was an inspiring Chairman of our newly formed Society, as well as an active member of several committees and, after fifty years of research, still gave stimulating lectures arousing the enthusiasm of the students.

By the outbreak of the first World War, Sir Joseph had already achieved international recognition for his work on the respiratory function of blood. He determined the role of neural stimulation in the oxygen consumption of several organs, established many of the factors that regulate the binding of oxygen to haemoglobin, and developed the field of foetal cardiovascular physiology<sup>2</sup>. His monograph on respiratory function of blood published in 1914 is still regarded as a classic. He also invented the Barcroft differential blood gas manometer<sup>3</sup>.

Always an active man, he led high altitude expeditions to Tenerife (1910), Monte Rosa (1911) and the Peruvian Andes (1922) where he explored the determinants of a human's



Joseph Barcroft pictured in 1891 when he graduated with a BSc from the University of London while still a pupil at The Leys School in Cambridge. From *Joseph Barcroft 1872 - 1947* by Kenneth J. Franklin (Oxford, 1953).



Joseph Barcroft lecturing at Cambridge in 1935. From *Joseph Barcroft 1872 - 1947* by Kenneth J. Franklin (Oxford, 1953).

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# Membership Update

## Professor Eileen Gibney, Honorary Membership Officer

One of the hot topics in membership currently is 'Generation Z', a term used to describe all those born between 1996 and 2010. As a group they are expected to become the most diverse, entrepreneurial, conservative, and educated generation to date. We need to be prepared for this and embrace them, and consider what they may want as members, both now and in the future.

As part of our stated aim of supporting our student and early career members, we recently rolled out a new three-year pilot programme, which offers all nutrition students based in the UK or Ireland, free University Group Membership, during their undergraduate years. Having compiled a list of all university courses in nutrition, we wrote to university course directors offering them the opportunity to take part. This proved popular and the students are signing up. Our job now is not to convince them to join, but to illustrate that this support covers their entire career, not just their years in higher education.

But we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. It's essential to keep up with their changing requirements, their reliance on social media and the internet and their thirst for instant knowledge, whilst still retaining reference to our history and to other member constituencies. Charles F Kettering, famous for many things including inventing refrigerant for air conditioning units and fridges, once said "You can't have a better tomorrow if you are still thinking about yesterday". This could mean many things to many people but, in membership terms, it means we must innovate and not stand still. We hope that our new University Group Members will receive a warm welcome and be inspired to remain as members for many years to come.

### MEMBERSHIP PANEL

It might seem like a cliché but any society, including The Nutrition Society, is only as good as its members – and that includes you, from students through to retired members. The Trustee Board, Advisory Council, the many committees and the staff within The Nutrition Society's office all work (tirelessly) to run the Society's activities including our publications, scientific meetings, studentships, bursaries and many more.

Within the Membership Committee we represent your interests. One of the Committee's main objectives is to develop and enhance the communication with members. Many activities have, and are continuing to be, developed to achieve this, including Member-Connect, newsletters, and the Gazette. However, we feel that this is more of a one-way approach, rather than a two-way dialogue, where we can also hear your views and get your input. To change this, we are going to create a Membership Panel, to which questions about the Society's ongoing and future activities could be routinely asked.

We want to recruit a representative group of members who will answer a short (5 minute) questionnaire once a month. The responses from this panel will help steer specific activities, feed into the development of ideas and provide information on the members' opinions. Essentially we want to hear your thoughts to help us continue to ensure the Society does the best it can for you, our valued members.

If you interested in being involved, and want to know more please see here.



# Trustee Update

Anastasia Z. Kalea, Trustee without Portfolio



Hello Nutrition Society members! It has been a little over two years since I joined the Board of Trustees of the Society as an Honorary Officer without Portfolio, following once more my curiosity to a valuable learning journey.

While we are looking forward to our Winter meeting, I remembered my first engagement with The Nutrition Society at one of the conferences in 2010. What stayed in my mind and my heart was the Society's distinctive culture in valuing collaboration and professionalism, prioritizing education and knowledge-sharing, while keeping up with the times, addressing real challenges and meeting the evolving needs of the profession.

I joined as a member at the time and before exploring career opportunities

in the UK, and I value the opportunities offered to me then as an early-career researcher; opportunities to learn from experts and stay tuned to industry trends. Most importantly I valued the genuine interest of the people I met through the Society to find out about my work and interests, and to connect me with peers, mentors, and leaders in the field. This enabled me to develop a professional network in the UK.

The same sense of community and collaboration welcomed me as an Honorary Trustee of The Nutrition Society. It is a fascinating experience to engage with fellow Trustees and committee members, and to continuously learn more about the Society's structure, governance, and strategic path. These past few months, I enjoyed contributing to the work around adherence to ethical standards, advancing the Society's initiatives aimed at endorsing evidence-based science, supporting research and collaboration, inclusivity efforts, and its overall contribution to the advancement of the profession it represents.

All of us in the Society are committed to supporting our members' nutrition science journey, no matter at which point in the journey they are. Opportunities for education and mentorship are an integral component of this, and facilitating ways for younger scientists to join is a priority. The option offered

this year to undergraduate students in Nutrition to join the Society for free has been one of the most exciting pilot actions for me. This removes a barrier for our younger members to be part of our learned society, to navigate the complex and ever-evolving landscape of the professional world, and to receive guidance and make informed decisions about their careers and personal growth. Such insights, practical advice and real-world experience cannot be gleaned from textbooks alone.

We are excited to see our younger members leading actions to make a positive impact, to advocate for best practices and to defend our professional standards. And all of us are looking forward to exploring fresh creative ideas and innovative perspectives. This constant learning has been a blessing in my role in Higher Education, training -as I often say- my future colleagues.

I consider my role at the Board of Trustees of such a prestigious society a great privilege for me, as I can advocate for the members' interests, contribute to protecting the integrity of the field, and to the development of policies related to the profession. I look forward to meeting many of you at our upcoming conferences.

**Anastasia Z. Kalea, Associate Professor (Teaching), University College London**

# Honorary Fellow Reflection

Professor Clyde Williams



## What first attracted you to sport science?

As might be predicted, as a Welshman I played rugby from an early age, playing for Aberystwyth University, and then playing senior rugby in the West Country while teaching chemistry at Devizes Grammar School. One of my university tutors, and rugby enthusiast, had returned from sabbatical in the USA and described the emerging field of exercise physiology. He suggested that I explore opportunities to do postgraduate work where I could combine my science background with my interest in sports performance. Prompted by a documentary on the work of Dr Griffith Pugh (of Everest fame) who, in preparation for the Mexico Olympics, studied the impact of altitude on athletic performance, I resigned my teaching post and applied for postgraduate studentships in the USA.

## How did your early career develop?

Enquires about the best place to study exercise physiology led me to Washington State University where I became a research assistant for Professor Philip Gollnick, one of two founding fathers of the field of exercise biochemistry. While working on fatigue and mitochondrial structure in human skeletal muscle we showed, using electron- photomicroscopy, the association between fatigue

and glycogen depletion. This study led to my career-long research on carbohydrate nutrition and exercise performance. While in the USA, I was able to take postgraduate courses in human physiology and biochemistry. Returning to the UK, I obtained a lectureship in the Department of Physiology at Aberdeen University, where I taught human physiology to science and medical students. During each summer I travelled to work in laboratories, in Sweden, Norway and Canada where I learned new techniques while collaborating on studies ranging from glycogen storage in diabetic skeletal muscle to the influence of thyroid disease on muscle fibre type transformations. After nine years in Aberdeen University, I was invited to Loughborough University to set up a research group in sports science and lead the development of the subject for undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. After eight years of research and teaching I was appointed to the first chair in Sports Science in the UK.

## Has there been a study or project that you have worked on that you would now consider to be a defining point in terms of your career?

As in many cases, research questions often precede the skills necessary to answer them. One of our early questions was the recruitment of the different muscle fibre types, during exercise, and the impact of carbohydrate nutrition on their fatigue. Having developed the skills necessary to undertake histochemistry and biochemical analyses of samples of human skeletal muscle we collaborate with a clinician (Professor Les Boobis) who took biopsy samples before and after exercise.

With all the tools necessary, we were able to describe the recruitment pattern of fast and slow muscle fibres during exercise and the impact of carbohydrate nutrition on performance. This study formed the bedrock of a whole raft of studies on exercise metabolism and nutrition.

## What has been the most rewarding, or challenging, part of your work?

The most rewarding part of my work has been supervising highly talented, enthusiastic, and hardworking, PhD students and watching their careers

develop to the point where many have become leaders in their respective fields.

The most challenging period of my career was when I arrived in Loughborough and had to develop physiology and biochemistry laboratories in a former locker room and small gymnasium. With limited space and limited equipment, the challenge was to find funding to equip the laboratories and support PhD studentships.

## In your opinion, how has the field of nutritional science and the key issues changed since your career started?

One of the main changes has been the use of tracer technology and molecular biology to examine changes in human metabolism following dietary interventions. In my own field we are now able to quantify not only the metabolic pathways that are activated during exercise, but also which genes are switched on or off during recovery.

## How has being a member of The Nutrition Society impacted on your career?

I became a member of the Society in 1978 and immediately felt at home because even the most distinguished members were approachable, friendly, and encouraging. As secretary to the Scientific Programme Committee, chaired by Dr Margaret Ashwell, I was fortunate to experience, at first hand, the commitment to the Society of so many members. They were exemplars of professionalism who gave their time and expertise freely to ensuring that the symposia (eight symposia a year) and annual conferences, were of the highest standards. The experience of serving the Society, albeit in a minor way, was a formative part of my career. As a result of this experience, I have always encouraged my students to join the Society and become active members.

**Professor Clyde Williams, OBE Emeritus Professor of Sports Science School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University.**

## Obituary

### Professor Philip James, Honorary Fellow of the Society

We were saddened to hear that one of our Honorary Fellows, and long-standing member of the Society, Professor Philip James passed away recently.

Professor James had an outstanding career. To acknowledge this, both the *British Journal of Nutrition* and the *Journal of Nutritional Science* will be publishing an obituary in tribute. You can also read Professor James' personal reflection on his career, and his hope for the future of nutrition by scanning the QR code on the right.





## Ask The Expert

### Ultra Processed Foods – why all the hype?

Unless you have been on a media ‘detox’ recently, you will have undoubtedly seen Ultra Processed Food (UPF) being discussed on mainstream TV shows, in the press and on social media. Whether canning fruit and vegetables, producing cheese or baking bread, food processing is nothing new in the UK. We asked Professor Janet Cade, Lead of the Nutritional Epidemiology Group at the University of Leeds, why UPF is receiving so much attention right now.

#### What is the issue with UPF?

Firstly, the UPF definition is complicated, indeed unworkable, and no two experts rate different foods the same way! Yes, much UPF is high fat, sugar, salt - but likely it is *these nutrients* rather than the processing that has the impact on health. The UPF moniker is misleading since definitions relate to what is in the foods (additives etc) rather than processing *per se*.

In the UK, we already have a tight classification system to define High Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS) foods through nutrient profiling. However, foods classed as UPF have a wide range of nutritional compositions. Some are energy dense and nutrient poor (biscuits, cakes etc) BUT some are foods we would encourage such as wholemeal bread, wholegrain breakfast cereals, yoghurts etc. Carrots are a good example. A whole carrot is classified as unprocessed group 1; canned carrots are group 3 processed; chopped packaged carrots are pre-prepared group 4, yet the nutrients vary little. Indeed, processing can actually help to preserve nutrients.

#### Why are UPFs getting so much media attention at the moment?

In my opinion, it is media hype fuelled by commercial interests. The UK government debated this topic in the House of Lords on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 looking at UPF and children’s health. This debate provided some useful thinking which highlights concerns and mentions growth of the processed food market, including what they refer to as ‘hyperpalatability’ of products. As noted by Lord Krebs in this debate, ‘numerous studies have shown that there is no agreement on what UPF is’ and ‘there is no scientific evidence to show that processing is harmful to health’ with the current evidence largely from epidemiological studies.

#### What are the research gaps?

The scientific evidence reviewed by SACN July 2023 states a large number of uncertainties around the data. Drawn from SACN, and other wider sources, limitations include:

- Studies are almost exclusively observational, and confounding factors – such as energy intakes – are not always taken into account. SACN conclude that it is still unclear whether associations with ill health are due to the nutrient content of the foods or some other aspect.
- Data collected from observational studies use methods not suited to highlighting the impact of processing. They tend to use food frequency questionnaires which

group foods together, not allowing processing to be disaggregated.

- We already have clear definitions of HFSS foods allowing us to assess, for example, which foods can be advertised at children’s TV time. Why are we not able to use this much clearer definition in practise?
- Future evidence, which allows us to differentiate between any health effects due to processing or nutrients, is needed. Even our National Diet and Nutrition Survey does not collect information about food intakes at that level of detail.
- Brand level data is needed using research grade tools such as myfood24. This includes >127,000 branded food products which would allow us to differentiate between processed and unprocessed foods. (I declare an interest in this, I have developed this tool and we are now supporting researchers to use it).

#### Is there anything else that we need to consider?

Regarding the evidence, the ‘devil is in the detail’. All cohort studies to date have used versions of food frequency questionnaires to define food intakes, *none of them specify whether food is prepared at home, shop bought or processed* so any analyses of that type of data are limited.

To take just one example, the French Nutrinet Sante study, which concluded that higher UPF consumption is associated with higher risk of CVD etc, used a diet assessment tool linked to a database with only 3,300 different items (whereas we know there are >100,000 different commercial foods in supermarkets). So, it cannot definitively say what is UPF and what is not. The products classified as UPF were also HFSS. The authors concluded ‘we did not have systematic access to the type of processing involved in the food. Thus, some subjectivity was involved in the classification process of the various foods.’ They added, ‘a second limitation pertains to the type of classification we selected. Although it offers a good overview of the degree of processing in the diet, it does not take account of the type of processing involved in the manufacturing of the product’. This sort of limitation would persist across all cohort studies.

Personally, I would like to see comparison of HFSS v UPF in relation to disease risk. I don’t think anyone has looked at this yet; I think when we do, we are likely to see similar risks. The only RCT carried out to date (by Kevin Hall and colleagues), used ad libitum feeding, and people consumed more calories (from carbohydrates and fat) on the UPF diets. They did not consume the same amount of energy on both diets. Hence inevitably, weight gain occurred on the UPF diets due to the higher energy consumption.

#### Professor Janet Cade, University of Leeds

We would like to thank Professor Cade for her insightful comments on this seemingly contentious topic. It is clear that there needs to be clearer definitions for UFP and more comprehensive dietary assessment tools before we can begin to discuss causality.

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## Ask The Expert

### Artificial Sweeteners - what’s the evidence?

Debate on the use of sweeteners (with variable pre-fixes - artificial/non or low-sugar/non or low-caloric/ non-nutrient/high-intensity) has always been fraught. While they can help reduce sugar intake, concerns remain around their safety and wider dietary impact.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and European Food Safety Authority’s (EFSA) have approved 8 sweeteners as safe for use in the UK and Europe - acesulfame potassium (Acesulfame-K), aspartame, cyclamate, neohesperidin dihydrochalcone, saccharin, sucralose, thaumatin, and stevia. While sweeteners are used in a wide range of products, drinks (eg ‘diet’ and ‘zero’ brands) remain the most recognised source. Intakes in the UK may have increased in recent years with the introduction of the soft drinks industry levy; a [monitoring report](#) indicated a 46% reduction in sugar in soft drinks, most likely due to the use of sweeteners.

Sweeteners have once again been in the news.

In May 2023 the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) published a conditional guideline suggesting that sweeteners not be used as a means of achieving weight control or reducing the risk of noncommunicable diseases. The recommendation was ‘conditional’ because of the low quality of the available evidence. When the draft guideline was issued for consultation, the UK Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) noted concern that the recommendation may be too strong given the limitations of the evidence base including possible concerns regarding study design and reverse causality. Response to the final guideline has been mixed (e.g. see [here](#) and [here](#)).

In July 2023, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the WHO, and the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives published their joint risk assessment of aspartame and cancer. The assessment concluded that aspartame was a Group 2B carcinogen (others include aloe vera and pickled vegetables) and that there was ‘limited evidence’ for cancer. However, the acceptable daily intake of aspartame remained unchanged (equivalent to about 11 cans of ‘diet’ drink per day). The FSA’s view is that aspartame continues to be safe to consume at current permitted levels.

UK dietary recommendations are based on the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN). Following a discussion at their [horizon scanning meeting](#) in June 2022, SACN are reviewing the WHO guideline and associated 2022 SR and MA and are due to discuss sweeteners again at their November 2023 [meeting](#).

Either way, it seems unlikely that there will be a conclusion to this issue any time soon.

**Dr Adrienne Cullum Diet, Obesity and Healthy Behaviours Directorate, OHID, DHSC**

# Publications Update

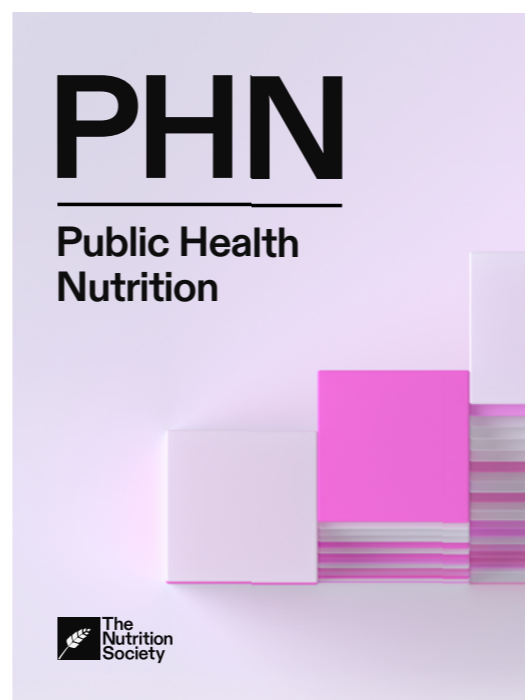
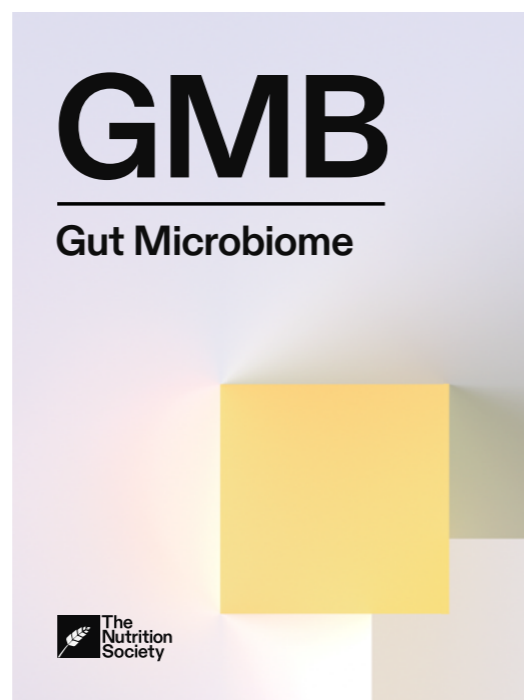
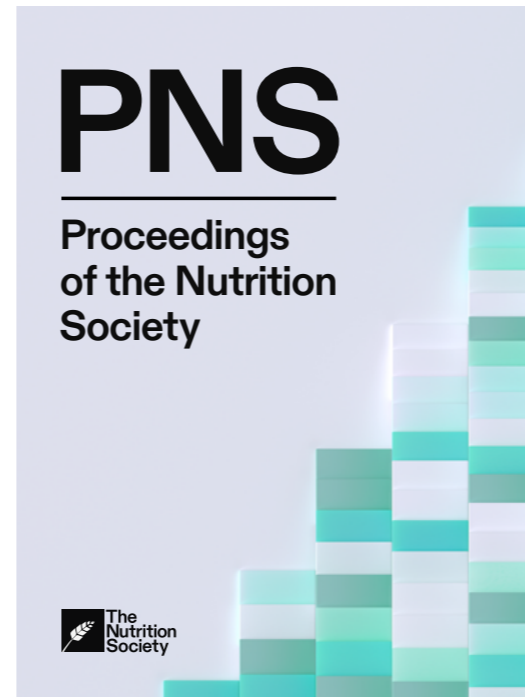
The journals remain central to all we do. Working closely with our publishing partner, Cambridge University Press, we have updated each journal brand to align with the Society's latest evolution. Our brand is more than just a logo or a colour palette – it's who we are, what we stand for, and why we're different – the journals now reflect this. Like our brand, the images associated with our journals are inspired by, and represent, a multiplying effect of people and science coming together.

The innovative and robust nutritional science within our journals will of course remain, as will our vigorous peer review process. However, we hope you'll agree, that the new journal artwork reflects a contemporary journal that you want to be associated with.

## Dr Andrea Azcarate-Peril, Editor in Chief, *Gut Microbiome*

Twenty years ago, advancements in scientific methods permitted the identification of the diverse components within complex microorganism communities, leading to a significant transformation in the way we approach their study. Today, the massive amount of information produced by short and long-read sequencing and the bioinformatics tools developed to analyze these data permit us to determine even marginal microbiome responses regarding composition and function to nutritional, pharmaceutical, and disease interventions.

Being aware of the massive amount of research generated by the newest 'omics' technologies, several questions have resonated as I step into the role of Editor in Chief. These are: *What is next for the study of our gut microbes? Is there a world where we can harness the power of the gut microbiome to prevent diseases? Have gut microbiome studies, approaches, and capabilities beneficially impacted human lives and the health of our planet?* I hope you will help us answer these by joining the *Gut Microbiome Journal* on its journey toward discovering sustainable and healthy choices that keep our loyal microbial companions happy and thriving. Scan the QR Code to watch the 'Meet the Editor' video.



## Professor Bernard Corfe, Editor in Chief, *Journal of Nutritional Science*

I'm delighted to be taking on the role of Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Nutritional Science (JNS)*, picking up on the outstanding work done by my predecessor, Professor Paul Trayhurn. Paul has been exceptionally generous with his time, his wisdom and in his support as we managed the process of handover, for which I am very grateful.

A lot of the issues now being raised about the quality of review and editing at certain journals and publishers were entirely foreseeable: the dynamic shift to author as client has led to a predictable reduction in quality and an increase in volume of poor science being published. As a result, there is an increasing need for careful reproduction of research to create a stronger reinforcing evidence base on which to ground knowledge and to support policy development.

My vision for *JNS* is to build its reputation for solid, reproducible science rather than novelty (including for well-conducted studies which question paradigms or convincingly demonstrate irreproducibility). We will publish good quality science by growing our editorial board, supporting training and development of peer reviewers. A key element of this vision is to give readers the confidence that they are digesting the best quality of science, and to give authors a positive and constructive experience in the review and development of their manuscript. I'm very pleased to report that the journal's reputation is solidifying already with the announcement of an impressive first impact factor of 2.5, which has quickly resulted in increased manuscript submission rates. Scan the QR Code to watch the 'Meet the Editor' video.



## Five reasons you should use graphical abstracts and social media for article promotion:

### 1 Simplify the science

Many of us are pressed for time. By summarising the key points from your research into small, digestible formats, this can ensure even those with limited time, resources or even access can take away the key findings from your work. This could be achieved on social media by simplifying the main research findings. Use emojis or bullet points to break up heavy text.

### 2 Stop, look, listen - capture people's attention

Create scroll-stopping visuals. Using graphical communications can capture and keep people's attention, better than the written word. When sharing on social media, visual tweets receive higher engagement and impressions than simply sharing a webpage link or plain text. Visual communications may also encourage and enhance memory and recall of your work.

### 3 Reach more readers

Publishing your work in journals is an important way of reaching other academics and highlighting the validity and credibility of your research. However, by translating your work into graphical abstracts and sharing on social media, you can reach a larger number of academics across the globe, and important individuals outside of academia. The potential significance of this for the field of nutritional science cannot be overstated.

## Science Is Not Finished Until It's Communicated

Dr Niamh O'Kane & Dr Holly Neill, Social Media Editors, Nutrition Society Publications

### How to utilise social media and graphics for the benefit of your research

In this modern digital age, science communication has become even more crucial and relevant. It is arguably easier than ever to share your research to optimise awareness and engagement. A huge proportion of time, effort and resources is invested to reach the stage of proudly publishing. Therefore, it makes sense to ensure this significant input is reflective of the output generated by enabling published nutrition research to reach the widest audience possible.

With so much misinformation online, it is imperative that robust, high-quality nutrition science has a loud presence and voice. The use of visual and dynamic media in science communication can be an effective tool for sharing research, allowing us to clarify complex topics and synthesise findings into digestible outputs which can reach large audiences. Within our role as Social Media Editors for the Nutrition Society Publications, we have witnessed first-hand the power of social media and, in particular, the power of infographics and graphical abstracts, in generating engagement with nutrition research.

### Top tips for creating a graphical abstract:

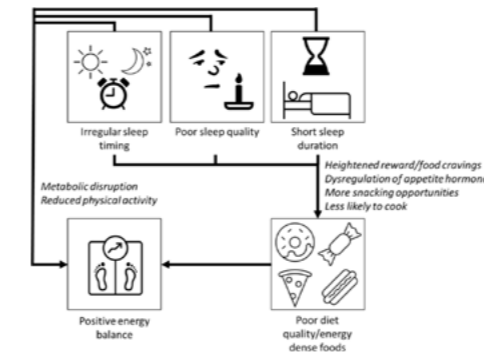
- **Keep it simple.** You can never capture an entire research paper in one graphic so take a step back and think about the most important finding(s). Remember: if your graphical abstract/ infographic captures someone's attention, they can access and read the full paper to find out more.
- For your graphic, you may wish to follow this flow: 1) Provide 1-2 key pieces of background information/context; 2) Keep top-level methodology information; 3) Share a few main points and one summary or concluding sentence.
- **Use colour and images** (but not too many to overwhelm the graphic).
- **Take advantage of Canva**, an online design platform ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)). There are both free and paid versions which can help you create professional looking visuals with minimal effort.
- Ask someone outside of your research area to review the graphic to **check it is easily understood at a glance** and captures the key details.
- Not creative or tech-savvy? **Reach out to other co-authors** or invite PhD researchers to create graphics (this can be great for their own scientific understanding as well as their CV!).

We have provided a very small selection of visual examples. Please reach out to The Nutrition Society for any further guidance regarding the use of social media or graphical abstracts/ infographics for your research ([office@nutritionistsociety.org](mailto:office@nutritionistsociety.org)).

### 4 Share your research again (and again...and again!)

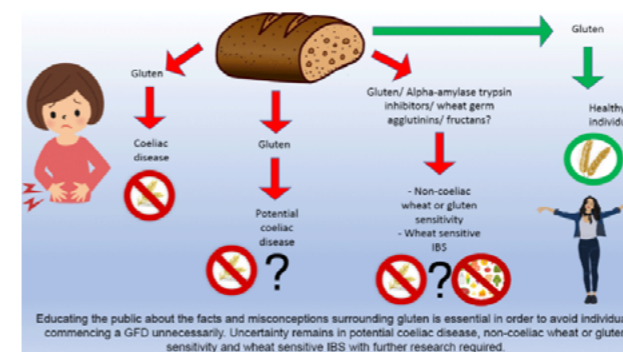
Creating and sharing a graphical abstract to promote the publication of your paper can be a great way to announce the good news, but you can use your graphical abstract again. You could include it in presentation slides, institutional and organisational websites and bios, and for communicating with stakeholder groups. These resources can be incredibly useful for internal and external presentations as a visual way to clearly show your research in an attractive and aesthetically pleasing manner.

Example 1: The emerging importance of tackling sleep-diet interactions in lifestyle interventions for weight management



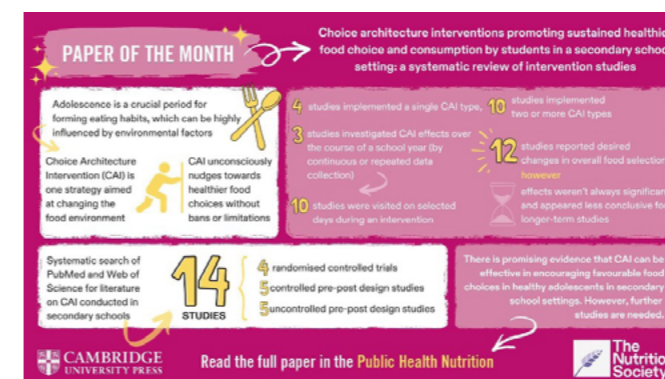
The emerging importance of tackling sleep-diet interactions in lifestyle interventions for weight management - Hall WL (2022) The emerging importance of tackling sleep-diet interactions in lifestyle interventions for weight management. Br J Nutr 128(3), 561-568.

Example 2: The truth about gluten!



The truth about gluten! - Raju S, Rej A & Sanders D (2023) The truth about gluten! Br J Nutr 129(2), 255-261.

Example 3: Infographic designed by Nutrition Society Publications Social Media Editor



Explore the Publications Twitter Account





# Irish Section Update

Dr Trish Heavey and Dr Aileen McGloin, Interim Secretaries, Nutrition Society Irish Section

We are both delighted to be sharing the role of Interim Secretary for the Irish Section while Dr Emma Feeney is on maternity leave, and we would like to extend our thanks to Emma for such a smooth handover.

It was wonderful to host the annual Irish Section conference in Athlone this year, where the focus was on 'Understanding the Role of Sex and Gender in Nutrition Research'. Looking forward to 2024, the local student organising committee, led by Ciara Goland, Miriam Murphy, Omid Eslami and Jennifer Wheelan, are in the midst of organising the postgraduate conference which will take place in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel in Athlone from the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024. This is open to all student members from across the Society. It is always a highlight for our student members and provides a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in which to present as well as network and socialise. Additionally, for this year, winners from

the annual postgraduate competition will present at this meeting instead of at the Irish Section Summer Conference. The deadline for submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> December at 12:00 GMT. More details can be found here: <https://www.nutritionandsociety.org/postgraduate-competition>

Next month, many of us will meet at FENS 2023, from the 14<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> November in Belgrade, Serbia. The theme of the conference is 'Food, Nutrition and Health: Translating science into practice' and will be chaired by Professor Sladjana Sobajic. We are really looking forward to such an exciting meeting and the opportunity to meet up with so many colleagues and friends.

We are really excited that the Irish Section will be hosting the inaugural Nutrition Society Congress 2024, superbly led by the local organising committee co-chaired by Professor Jayne Woodside and Dr Anne Nugent at

Queen's University Belfast. The congress will take place from 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at the Assembly Buildings, Belfast. The theme will focus on Nutrition Science in 2024: new data-focused approaches and challenges. We look forward to welcoming you all to Belfast next year for what promises to be an inspiring first meeting in this new format. Look out for booking details on The Nutrition Society website.

Finally, we would like to welcome new members to the Irish Section Committee: Dr. Eamon Laird as Ordinary Member and Cliona Ni Chonnachain as student representative. We also sincerely thank Lisa Kelliher for all of her work as student representative of the Irish Section Committee. Sincere thanks to all the members of the Irish Section committee, past and present, for their continued hard work and to Irish Section Members for their continued support and engagement.

# Student Section Update

Eva-Leanne Thomas, Student Section Chair



My name is Eva-Leanne Thomas, I am a qualified Associate Nutritionist having graduated from the University of Surrey with a BSc in Nutrition in 2021. As part of my degree programme, I completed a placement training year at Yakult UK as the Science Communications Intern, where I gained an understanding of science communications within the growing field of gut health.

Following on from my BSc, I wanted

to understand more about how foods impact not only human health but also planetary health, which led me to apply for a two-year international Master in Food System. I studied for this at the Autonomous University of Madrid, University of Reading, and University of Turin (in collaboration with EIT Food).

In keeping with the theme of sustainable nutrition, my academic passion, I am now embarking on my latest academic journey as a doctoral researcher at Queens University Belfast. I will be examining the development of a food labelling index displaying both nutritional and environmental information and testing consumer responses to such an index.

I have been a part of the Student Section for over four years now, having held the position of Communications Representative since October 2019. I have absolutely loved being a part of the Student Section, having been involved in the creation of the first student

newsletter, now known as the Student and Early Career focus, participating in Society events such as Nutrition Futures, and attending events on behalf of the Society, such as Voice of the Future.

Having benefited from involvement in the Society over the past four years, I wanted to stand for election as the Student Section Chair to help other students feel empowered and supported. Over the next two years I hope to strengthen the connection between the Student Section, Student Ambassadors, and student members, creating an integrated network that is more confident in engaging with the Society. Additionally, I want to empower and support the Student Section in their roles, allowing them to plan events, activities and provide opportunities that really serve the needs of student members. I am very excited to be working with such a committed and inspired Student Section, and with the support of the Society, I look forward to seeing what we can achieve.

# Summer Conference 2023 Overview

## Nutrition at key stages of the lifecycle

3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July 2023, The Hilton, Liverpool, UK

The conference gave delegates a chance to explore the nutritional requirements across all stages of life as experts come together to discuss topics ranging from early nutrition during pregnancy, to the challenges faced for nutritionally vulnerable, elderly populations. Speakers also discussed some of the dietary modifications used for primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease as well as the potential health impacts of food fortification and reformulation strategies.



266 in-person delegates

15 countries reached



97 Original Communications

6 Symposium

35 Guest speakers



220 #NSSummer23 tweets

# Nutrition Society Congress 2024

## More Networking, More Science

If you haven't heard the news, the new Nutrition Society Congress (formerly the Summer Conference) is here, bringing you more science and networking opportunities than ever before. We will be kicking off the inaugural congress in Belfast, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July, at the beautiful and historic Assembly Buildings.

For those of you that have been to our Summer Conferences over the years, you will be familiar with the previous format; a relatively singular track of activity, organised by the Society's Science Committee and appointed Local Organising Committee, accompanied by fun and relaxed social events. Similarly, the new Congress will still have Nutrition Society-led symposia running throughout, this time hosted by the Irish Section, with the local team from Queen's University Belfast and the broader Irish Section leading on delivery of this core scientific content.

### So, what's new?

Excitingly, delegates will have the opportunity to engage with even more research, with the core Society symposia complimented by symposia organised and delivered by partners of the Society, non-profit/NGOs, universities, and the private sector. This means that the Congress will appeal to all nutritional scientists, not just those within any one discipline. It's an opportunity for everyone working in nutrition science to come together and engage with an array of research that all interplays with one another.

With a new appreciation for networking in recent years, the Congress also provides the time and facility to engage with new and old colleagues, not only from your discipline but across the profession. We've made a conscious effort to maximise the length of the networking breaks and make the social events more accessible, particularly by opting for a more relaxed dinner so that more of you are able to join us!

### What's the topic?

For the Nutrition Society core programme, the theme is 'Nutrition Science in 2024: new data-focused approaches and challenges'. New speakers are regularly being announced, so do check the websites and socials for developments.

### Ready to join us in Belfast?

Scan the QR code to see the latest programme and register for the conference.

### Become part of the Congress

Have you also thought about hosting a short symposia or exhibition stand, to accelerate your research impact?

If a Congress full of nutritional scientists is where you'd like to disseminate your latest research, join us! Contact [supporters@nutrition society.org](mailto:supporters@nutrition society.org) for further information.

### Nutrition Society Congress

*Nutrition Science in 2024: new data-focused approaches and challenges*

2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July, Assembly Buildings, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

The aim of this congress is to provide an overview of the diversity of the data collected and used within the field of nutrition science and how analysis of this data has and can be used to progress the discipline.



Register today.

[nutrition society.org](http://nutrition society.org)



## Setting Conference Delegate Fees

I recently attended a nutrition conference as a guest of the organisers. These events are always an interesting exercise to learn how others organise their events and look after their delegates. This particular conference was well run, and very much on par with one of ours. By chance, I found out from a colleague also attending that they had paid £800 as a delegate (in addition to their travel and hotel costs). By contrast, Nutrition Society conferences have never, in the past nine years, cost more than £350. But, even at £350, I'm often told by our members our conferences are too expensive!

It is important to remember, though, our conferences are considered a charitable activity, therefore they are not a profit-making activity. Our aim is to use our Society funds to keep the costs at a manageable level, providing a subsidy to bridge the gap between the actual costs of the conference, less fees paid by delegates/members.

By way of an example in the spirit of full transparency, I thought I would share some of the provisional budget calculations for hosting our 2024 conferences.

When setting the delegate rate, there are items that I describe as 'above' or 'below' the line. Above the line are the fixed costs of the venue, the rental of the space, the provision of coffee and lunch breaks, the electronic poster boards (£2000 on average), the welcome reception, any marketing costs (for example, delegate bags, printing, signage etc). In the case of our summer 2024 conference in Belfast, our provisional estimate is £47,400 in costs. We anticipate 275 delegates, so then have to establish a set of delegate fees to cover the £47,400. Below the line are the additional costs that add benefit to the conference - these are covered by the Society subsidy. For example, the costs of the speakers (which include their travel and accommodation costs and delegate fees). In addition, there are always various guests at conferences who we need to fund the same as speakers. For the Belfast meeting these combined speaker and guest costs total an estimated £34,436. Therefore, the total cost of hosting the summer conference in 2024 in Belfast is £81,836. If we divide that by the expected 275 delegates, the cost per head is just under £300 per delegate. The highest delegate fee to be paid by a member has been set at £220, with the lowest fee for a student attending as part of a group rate at £75. You can see therefore that the range of subsidies available per member is quite significant from £80 to £225.

Any additional funds that can be raised to offset the cost of a conference are always welcome. These are generally used to reduce the conference subsidy (in the case of the Belfast conference, that is currently £34,211), ensuring that the Society, whilst meeting its charitable objective of organising nonprofit making conferences, helps its long-term financial sustainability by not committing to an ever-increasing drawdown on its funds. Finally, across 2024, the Scottish Section conference currently requires a subsidy from the Society of £17,000 while the Winter conference needs £33,000. In total, throughout 2024, £85,000 will be required from the Society's charitable income to support three conferences in 2024, but the highest delegate fee a member will pay at any one of these conferences will only be £280.

Subsidising conferences as a charitable objective is expensive, but conferences provide a valuable member benefit and lead to sound scientific outcomes and sustained impact.

Mark Hollingsworth, CEO

# A Day In The Life Of...

## A Lecturer in Human Nutrition

My academic career so far has followed the traditional academic career pathway. I graduated from my undergraduate degree in Pharmacology from Newcastle University in 2010. It was during my final year dissertation that I was first exposed to academic research whilst undertaking a lab-based project. Although I found it challenging (long days in the lab, experiments not working, and getting my head around stats), I also really enjoyed it and found it very rewarding. I was also very lucky to have a fantastic supervisor who was extremely supportive—something I believe is hugely important in shaping a researcher. So, I thought, why don't I try to do a PhD?

At this point, I don't think anyone really realises what a PhD project entails! And, of course, every single PhD project and experience can be different. I was extremely lucky to be supervised by Professor John Mathers— a worldwide expert in the field of nutrition and fantastic mentor - and to join a collaborative team. During my PhD, I was a team member on a study investigating the effects of dietary fibre on markers of gut health and of colorectal cancer risk in healthy participants. This exposed me to running human studies, something which I hugely enjoyed, and my research was very much lab-based, looking at cellular and molecular markers. I also had the opportunity to contribute to other human studies, for example in the field of metabolomics and investigating the molecular effects of bariatric surgery. I was very lucky that after my PhD, in 2015, there was the opportunity to become a postdoctoral researcher managing another human study which aimed to investigate the role of diet and lifestyle factors on markers of healthy ageing and of colorectal cancer risk.

In the middle of 2020, I was successful in getting a WCRF grant as Co-Investigator on a project that would allow me to continue as a Postdoc for 3 more years. This was extremely timely as the new project was desk-based as it was a nutrition and cancer epidemiology study working with UK Biobank data from >500,000 participants, so I could

work from home running the analyses during the pandemic. This was a very steep learning curve for me. However, it allowed me to develop a new set of skills and I discovered how much I enjoyed epidemiological research.

I still consider myself to be a relatively early career researcher and must admit I was a bit scared to jump from Research Associate/Postdoctoral Researcher to Lecturer. However, when an opportunity presented for a Lecturer in Human Nutrition at Newcastle University earlier this year, I decided to take the leap and apply! I was delighted to get offered the position, and one of the main benefits is that I now have a permanent academic contract, as opposed to fixed-term contracts as a Postdoc. One detail that is perhaps a bit unique about my Lectureship is that I am employed by the research institute (Population Health Sciences Institute) as opposed to the School of Biomedical, Nutritional and Sports Sciences at Newcastle University. This means that my role, in addition to teaching, has a strong research component. I love this aspect; although I very much enjoy teaching and find it hugely rewarding, I am very passionate about scientific research. So, I get the best of both worlds!

The truth is, my role varies hugely on a day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month basis! This will depend a lot on how many lecturers and seminars I am teaching that semester, whether I have any big deadlines e.g., grant applications approaching, and my research priorities—for example, if I'm actively running a study, statistically analysing data, or writing up a research paper.

**Rather than breaking it down into my 'timetable' on a day-to-day basis, I thought I would give you a little taster as to the kinds of jobs and activities that make up my days:**

**Teaching:** Teaching is not just defined by lectures and seminars, but also covers things like supervising research projects and PhD students, and being a personal tutor. There's quite a bit of prep work ahead of teaching, for example putting together slides and assignments. I am

also involved in the development of modules and designing new modules for the next academic year, which takes a lot of planning and consideration, for example matching up competencies for AfN accreditation. Every Monday morning, I like to check-in on the first-year module that I lead on the Nutrition and Dietetics degrees and send a to-do list and summary of the week ahead to the students, as well as to check the comments and questions on the Discussion board.

**Research:** Like I mentioned, my role has a strong research component. This includes working on ongoing projects and developing new research ideas and grant proposals. Some research is also undertaken via undergraduate and postgraduate students, and I find it hugely rewarding to see students develop their research skills during their dissertation projects. Similar to myself ~13 years ago, some even decide to continue this with a PhD!

**Meetings:** Wednesdays are always my busiest day with meetings, as this is the day that most people will be in the office, and very often I will be in back-to-back meetings. For example, we have our weekly 'nutrition and colorectal cancer' research team meeting in the morning, where we present and discuss our research or have a Journal Club. In the afternoon, we also have our larger Human Nutrition & Exercise Research Centre weekly meeting, which I co-organise. In between, I will have meetings with colleagues and students. Although it can be a long day of meetings, I really enjoy being back to meetings in person instead of Zoom/Teams.

**Committees and posts of responsibility:** I am a member of several internal and international research committees and organisations for which we hold regular meetings and run activities. For example, I am the Early Career Network board representative for the Nutrigenomics Association (NuGO) and Social Media & Blogs working group member within the European Nutrition Leadership Platform (ENLP).

**Conferences:** one of my favourite things as an academic researcher is disseminating my research findings and attending conferences. I've been very lucky to have had the opportunity to attend and present at some of the top conferences in the fields of nutrition and cancer, in cities such as Boston, Tokyo, and Belgrade! It's a great way to network and develop collaborations, and of course learn about the latest scientific research from all over the world. I also like to contribute to the organisation of conferences, such as The Nutrition Society member-led short conference on 'Diet and Colorectal Cancer'.

**Other activities I undertake include:**

- attending internal and external seminars and webinars, as well as reading recent publications, to keep up with the latest research
- being Review Editor for journals such as *Frontiers in Nutrition*, or Guest Editor for special collections, as well as reviewing research articles
- developing collaborations—for example, I spent a month undertaking research at the Centre Leon Berard in Lyon with the aim of producing pilot data for future grant applications

Compared with my postdoctoral post, I now have far more positions of responsibility, both internally and externally, for example being an active member of committees with the aim of contributing to the scientific community. It also feels a lot more 'managerial'— I oversee and manage a lot more projects but perhaps may not be as 'hands on' when it comes to doing the research myself. Ultimately, this Lectureship is providing me with the invaluable opportunity to become more independent, develop my research niche and grow my own team; whilst contributing to teaching Nutrition, Dietetics and other students who will form the future scientists!

**Dr Fiona Malcomson,**  
Newcastle University

“Although, I very much enjoy teaching and find it hugely rewarding, I am very passionate about scientific research. So, I get the best of both worlds!”

# Maintaining High Standards In A Changing World - Association for Nutrition (AfN)

Our world is constantly changing and evolving, not just in respect to the evidence-base but also technology, working formats and the wider environment we all live in. Therefore, it is important for regulators to routinely review their competencies, standards and guidance, to ensure they continue to protect the public and support high professional standards. This year we have concluded several collaborative reviews and development activities, resulting in the publication of:

## Revised Registration Competencies and Standards for Degree Accreditation

The AfN's core role is to protect and benefit the public. We do this through the setting the professional competencies required to join (& remain on) the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN). This is a register of competent, qualified nutrition professionals who meet our rigorously applied standards for scientifically sound evidence-based nutrition and its use in practice. We also accredit degree programmes which meet our standards and ensure their graduates can demonstrate achievement of the core competencies for registration as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr). ANutr registrants then undertake a period of professional practice to develop the further competencies required for registration as a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr).

Following reviews and public consultations, updated ANutr and RNutr competencies have been published, along with revised standards for degree accreditation. The main changes include updated language, re-naming and

re-ordering of the core competency areas, use of Miller's Pyramid to help visualisation of the levels of each sub-competency, specialist area of practice specific sub-competencies and removal of duplications.

The revised competencies for RNutr registration come into effect 1st April 2024, followed by the revised ANutr core competencies and Degree Accreditation Standards coming into effect 1st April 2025.

## Standards for Freelance & Independent Practice

In response to feedback received during the registration competencies consultation, and the changing employment market in the UK, we developed the AfN Standards for Independent and Freelance Practice. This document details a minimum set of standards for all AfN registrants (ANutr and RNutr), ensuring everyone knows and understand what is expected of all ANutrs and RNutrs who conduct any independent/ freelance activities, regardless of the number of clients, and whether working directly with the public, with brands, organisations or business clients. It also provides a set of defined standards for those who may be the only nutritionist within an organisation and, therefore, may be practicing independently with no internal nutrition support available.

These new standards came into effect 1st July 2023 and are divided into three areas, covering: communications, legal requirements, and the importance of reflection, evaluation and support. While many of the areas featured are already

covered within the UKVRN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, grouping these in a separate document provides additional clarity to registrants working in these areas, while also providing clients, employers, educators, and the public with a point of reference for the minimum standards expected from our registrants in further detail.

## ANutr Development Framework

Graduate nutritionists who join AfN as ANutrs are able to transfer to RNutr after completing around three years of experience applying their knowledge and skills in practice in their chosen specialism and undertaking appropriate CPD to maintain and improve their competence. Once an ANutr has demonstrated that they have all the competencies for their specialism, they can apply to transfer to RNutr registration, based on the assessment of a portfolio of evidence.

The aim of the Framework is to demystify the transfer process, provide support to ANutrs during their vital early career years, and build on the strong sense of community which exists in the nutrition profession. Ultimately, our aim is always public protection, and by improving the development support available to ANutrs we are supporting the competent practice of nutrition across our registrant community, fostering safe and ethical practice and promoting public safety.

## The framework is organised into three strands:

- Strand 1: Guidance and Support Resources
- Strand 2: Mentoring
- Strand 3: Portfolio development

You can find more information about the latest publications and developments at [www.associationfornutrition.org](http://www.associationfornutrition.org).



# The Nutrition Society Academy – have you subscribed yet?

Over the past year how much have you invested in your CPD, both in time and financially? My assumption is that you've invested heavily without necessarily having the hours to show for it. Well, we can help you with that. If you haven't yet subscribed to the Nutrition Society Academy – the platform that is here to power up your career.

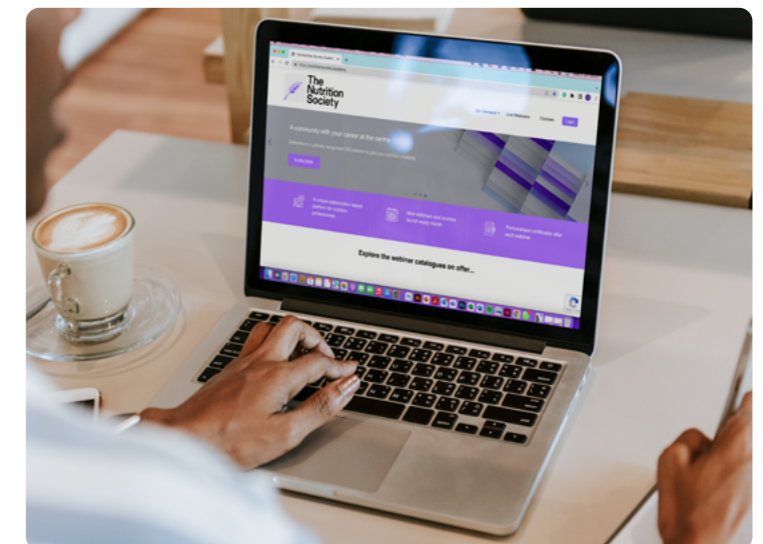
As we approach the Academy's first birthday, I want to quickly remind you of the superb benefits you receive when you subscribe.

The Academy platform, known to subscribers as the "Netflix for nutrition", boasts over 70 on-demand webinar and course titles on a range of topics covering nutritional science, professional skills, and transitioning research to practice.

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Nutrition Society members get a generous 20% discount on both monthly and annual subscriptions. Special student and low-income country rates are available too. Prices start from as little as £2 per month.



<https://nutritionsociety.academy>

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## Commercial packages

#Subscribers in group	Annual fee per person
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<10 subscribers	£ 45.00
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If you haven't signed up to the Nutrition Society Academy yet, our subscribers would say that you are categorically missing out!

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"Nutrition Society Academy subscription is definitely a valuable investment in your personal professional development."

# Theme Leads Update

## Novel Nutrition Research Methodologies and Technologies

Dr Lisa Coneyworth, Theme Lead

'Our future is a race between the growing power of technology and the wisdom with which we use it' Stephen Hawkins, 2015.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is swiftly becoming an integral part of our daily lives, whether we are querying Alexa for weather updates, interacting with customer service chatbots, or, for those who embrace the cutting edge, utilising smart home sensors to adjust lighting and thermostats. It is becoming less of a novelty; AI has evolved into a pivotal driver of innovation. Its role in the future of nutrition research is exciting and, when harnessed correctly, has the potential to revolutionise existing research methods and open the door to innovative methodologies and technologies.

While it is true that AI is a long way from replicating the emotional intelligence and empathy of a human, there are many areas where it can match or even surpass human capabilities. The proliferation of AI in processing, visualising, and analysing vast data sets, including omics and epidemiological data, is nothing short of extraordinary, although it is not impervious to errors and bias. Among the notable applications, the use of AI to enhance dietary intake assessment has gained significant attention in recent times. The acquisition of detailed and accurate self-reported dietary intake data has always been a challenging task for nutritional scientists. The incorporation of novel food image recognition technology to streamline this process is an attractive prospect, both in the research and client-oriented settings. As algorithms continue to evolve and the technology's ability to reliably identify food items, portion sizes, and weights improves, it will be fascinating to see how deeply this approach becomes integrated.

However, the rapid advancement of AI in nutritional science is not without its challenges. It is imperative that regulatory frameworks keep pace with these developments.

As AI continues to expand its reach beyond the research environment, it is crucial that the benefits outweigh any potential risks, and that ethical and privacy concerns are proactively addressed.

The Novel Nutrition Research Methodologies and Technologies theme is naturally broad and spans the breadth of nutritional science research. I am always keen to speak with members who would like to explore ideas for potential Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and/or discuss new ways to develop our Theme. Please contact me via the Member-Connect platform <https://www.nutrition-society.org/member-connect> or the membership team.

**Keen to get involved? Propose or join a Special Interest Group (SIG)**

Themes represent new and developing areas of nutritional science, they exist to promote and support the advancement of nutritional science.

The SIGs within each theme support members with specific areas of interest to ensure that the needs of the membership and their interests are fully supported.



## Nutrition In The Treatment, Management, And Prevention Of Disease

Dr Oonagh Markey, Theme Lead

As I am writing this piece, just over one month away from the Winter Conference 2023 on "Diet and lifestyle strategies for prevention and management of multimorbidity", I've been busy finalising the event with The Nutrition Society Office. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to The Royal Society, London for our hybrid meeting.

Our Theme now represents three SIGs, which aim to champion novel areas of nutrition research and develop shared research opportunities. Most recently, the 'Nutrition, physical activity and cancer' SIG, chaired by Dr Steve Wootton (University of Southampton) was established.

Over the past year, there has been significant public debate

regarding the possible link between ultra-processed food (UPF) consumption and adverse health outcomes. The most widely used scheme, NOVA, categorises foods based on processing-related criteria. The NOVA UPF category captures many foods that have a low nutritional value, including items high in fat, sugar, or salt. However, one of the shortcomings of the NOVA system is that it fails to assess the nutritional properties of foods. This means that some manufactured foods, which provide consumers with secure, safe, and affordable access to nutrients, also fall under the UPF category. Furthermore, there are limited data at present on biological mechanisms linking ultra-processing to poorer health outcomes.

## Food Systems

Dr Christian Reynolds, Theme Lead

One of the most exciting new initiatives to emerge from the Society in recent years has been the Nutrition: Science and Health All Party Parliamentary Group. This offers a place for MPs and members of the House of Lords interested in evidence-based nutritional science to engage with the wider nutrition community.

My hope is that a wide variety of parliamentarians and Nutrition Society members engage with this new APPG. It offers a forum to raise parliamentary awareness and stimulate informed debate around regional, national & global nutrition issues; and to champion nutrition science to support evidence-based policymaking in areas surrounding nutrition and health challenges. This APPG will be vital in getting evidence-based nutrition into the policy debate on issues such as disease prevention, healthy ageing, food security, school meals, sustainable diets, animal nutrition, education and training.

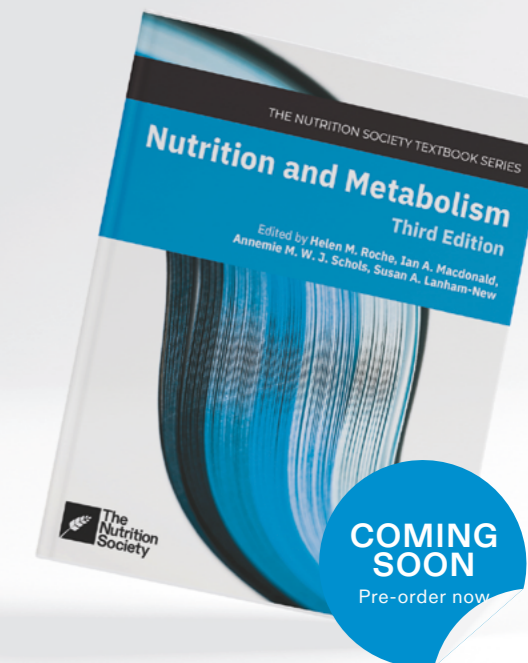
The APPG is not the only avenue in which Nutrition Society members can engage with parliament. There are also the submissions of evidence to select committees. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, has been requesting evidence on a number of topics including "Fairness in the food supply chain", and "Soil Health". One call for evidence that is currently open is the "Education and Careers in Land-based Sectors" which certainly needs input from the nutrition community. We need to make our voices heard on the importance of equipping primary, secondary, further and higher education students with the nutrition skills and knowledge no matter their role in the food system. I encourage all members to submit evidence if they can.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to highlight the ongoing work of the many SIGs related to Food Systems. This includes the UK focused "School Food Systems" SIG, as well as the globally focused "Global School Health and Nutrition" SIG. Both have some great events coming up. I am particularly looking forward to the Global School Food and School Food System SIG symposium at the 14<sup>th</sup> European Nutrition Conference FENS 2023.

As highlighted at the Society's previous Winter Conference on "Architecture of food: processing, structure and health", it is increasingly recognised that the structure or matrix of foods has a major role to play in nutrient availability, absorption, and physiological responses.

This stresses the importance of assessing foods objectively based on their overall nutritional qualities and structure, rather than uniformly discouraging foods based on their level of processing.

Do members feel that there is scope to develop a SIG around the topic of food structure, processing, and health? I would be interested to get your thoughts on this. If you like to propose a SIG around this topic, please do feel free to get in touch at [o.markey@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:o.markey@lboro.ac.uk)



## Nutrition and Metabolism, 3rd Edition

Now in its third edition, Nutrition and Metabolism has been updated throughout to present readers with the core principles of nutrition in the context of a systems and health approach.

Written by a team of internationally renowned experts, the text includes information on:

- Body composition, energy metabolism, proteins, amino acids, carbohydrates, lipids, vitamins, minerals, trace elements, food intake, and food composition
- Energy, macronutrients, pregnancy and lactation, growth and aging, brain nutrition, sensory systems and food palatability, the gastrointestinal system, and the cardiovascular system
- Societal food choices, over- and undernutrition, eating disorders, dieting, foetal programming, cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes
- How nutrition affects the liver, pancreas, kidney, lungs, heart and blood vessels, and how nutrition relates to the development of traumatic, infectious, and malignant diseases

Nutrition and Metabolism is an essential resource for students and practitioners of nutrition and dietetics, as well as students majoring in other subjects that have a nutrition component.

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# Nutrition and Public Health: Joint UK, Turkey and Georgian conference

The Georgian Nutrition Society in association with the Nutrition Society and the Sabri Ülker Foundation hosted an international conference and workshops in Tbilisi entitled 'Nutrition and Public Health' on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The primary objective was to review the situation in Georgia in comparison with that elsewhere and to derive inspiration from initiatives that have made and continue to make a positive impact.

Distinguished academics from all three countries participated, with presentations covering the challenges that public health faces in relation to current trends in nutrition. This underlined the importance of adequate education as well as collaboration between food companies and scientists to improve the offering of more healthy choices.

We are grateful for the contribution to and support of The Nutrition Society for this conference, which followed on from the two previous joint meetings of our societies over the last three years. The audience, primarily from Georgia, Turkey

and the UK, very much appreciated the conference presentations and the conference was well attended in the beautiful setting of the Rooms and Stamba Hotels, Tbilisi. The workshops attracted lively participation, including many Georgian students who demonstrated a great interest in nutrition science. The event also attracted the interest of the Georgian media and was featured on national television news.

This time we ran a hybrid event enabling a large number of online delegates to join via The Nutrition Society platform while the Sabri Ülker Foundation's YouTube channel allowed both Georgian and Turkish health professionals to attend.

As the conference progressed, it became clear that both Turkish and Georgian health professionals face many similar issues, in particular concerning a limited provision for nutrition education. In Turkey, whilst specific university degree courses do exist in nutrition and dietetics, future doctors still receive relatively little training in how to deliver nutritional advice to their patients. In Georgia, the situation is even more

challenging as there are currently no university degree courses in nutrition. Given the importance of nutrition to public health, improving education provision was identified as a key priority.

Plans were unveiled to establish a forum to provide a platform for academics, health professionals, policymakers, the farming industry, and food companies, in the region and beyond, to share their knowledge and consider opportunities for collaboration on improving public health for the benefit of all.

The Georgian Nutrition Society is grateful to both The Nutrition Society and the Sabri Ülker Foundation for helping to organise and support this successful event, as well as to our Georgian sponsors. We hope that forging such links between our three societies will lead to opportunities for further collaboration as we share our knowledge and experience.

We are hoping that the proceedings of the event will be published soon. Please look for updates on our website <https://www.georgiannutritionssociety.com>

# Academy of Nutrition Sciences Four Years On

Not to be confused with The Nutrition Society's recently launched Academy, the [Academy of Nutrition Sciences \(ANS\)](#) was established in 2019 to be an authoritative voice advancing and promoting evidence-based nutrition science for our discipline, including those engaged in research, education and training, clinical practice, and nutrition science communication. Its mission is to champion nutrition science, enhancing its impact on policy and health for public benefit. It results from a longstanding collaboration between its founder members: the Association for Nutrition, British Dietetic Association, British Nutrition Foundation, and Nutrition Society.

## Outputs from the Academy

Position Papers, published open access in peer reviewed journals, are the main outputs to date. These are aligned with our strategic priorities and present the Academy's formal position on a major topic, identifying challenges and opportunities, and making recommendations.

### ANS Position Paper: Evidence for Dietary Recommendations

The first [Position Paper](#), published in December 2020 in the [British Journal of Nutrition](#), focused on the nature of the evidence base underpinning dietary recommendations and the systematic processes used by expert panels to ensure that rigour, relevance and consistency are brought to their conclusions. Click [here](#) for an overview

In addition to the full paper, there were accompanying editorials in [Nutrition Bulletin](#) and the [Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics](#), which highlight the Academy's recommendations. The Position Paper also addresses some of the challenges inherent in studying diet-disease relationships and lessons learned over the past 45 years of evidence-based policy making in dietary prevention of non-communicable diseases, such as cancers and cardiovascular diseases. One such challenge concerns the investigation of the biological mechanisms underlying diet-disease relationships through experimental studies. A recent [publication](#) by one of the Position Paper's authors, discusses this in detail and it is also explored in a [blog](#).

### ANS Position Paper: Evidence for Health Claims

The second [Position Paper](#) on use of nutrition evidence, published in the [British Journal of Nutrition](#) in November 2022, focuses on the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation and use of evidence to support health claims for foods. Click [here](#) for an overview. A [blog](#) discussing why health professionals need to know about the processes in place to regulate the use of such claims is available and accompanying editorials appeared in [Nutrition Bulletin](#) and the [Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics](#). These editorials summarise the recommendations and highlight the implications of the Regulation for nutrition and dietetic professionals.

### ANS Position Paper: Evidence for Nutrition Interventions for Individuals

A third Position Paper will be published shortly, examining how evidence is used to guide individualised nutrition interventions in clinical practice. This is primarily achieved through the development of clinical practice guidelines, which are systematically developed statements that attempt to bridge the gap between research and clinical practice, guiding the practitioner and individual to implement treatments for specific clinical circumstances based upon the best available evidence.

## Blog posts

We also publish [topical blog](#) posts on our website. Some are news items but others – called 'Perspectives' – aim to encourage debate or reflection on controversial issues, focusing on the strength of the evidence base underpinning these issues. Unlike our [Position Papers](#), blog posts do not present an official opinion of the members of the Academy.

## Communicating with stakeholders

With the support of nutrition-trained volunteers and utilising communications expertise residing within its Member Organisations, we are developing a communications programme. Central to this has been a refresh of the Academy's website and the next stage is to develop a media presence, supported by volunteers.



## Save The Date - Your Calendar For 2024

**Irish Postgraduate Conference**  
21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024, Athlone, Ireland

**Scottish Section Conference**  
Circadian rhythms in health and disease  
26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Aberdeen, Scotland

**Nutrition Society Congress**  
New data – focused approaches and challenges  
2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Winter Conference**  
21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025, London



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