

am working towards increasing this number because evidence-based RDN researchers are needed.

7. How has your affiliation with the Academy impacted your career progression?

My affiliation with the Academy has impacted my career in several ways. First, being able to present my research (and having my students present their research) at FNCE has allowed my work to become more visible, and I have been able to make many professional contacts. Secondly, serving on the Executive Committee for the Research DGP has also provided me with multiple collaborators, and friends, as well as the knowledge and skills to help improve my research capabilities.

8. If someone were to ask you to explain why research is important to the field of dietetics, what would you say?

Evidence-based practice. Research findings provide RDNs with the evidence-based tools to assess and treat clinical subjects and/or assess and plan for population interventions. I see how important this is every single day, completely independently of my research but rather through teaching medical nutrition therapy. Everything I talk about in class is available because of previous and ongoing research. This is what sets us apart from other nutrition professionals. We do not base our advice or practice on what we think works - we implement our interventions by using what we KNOW works because of research.



Research DPG Student Spotlight

Abby Gillman
Drexel University

1. Please list your research interests.

My main research interests are childhood obesity, school-based interventions, and parental involvement.

2. Please describe your path (i.e., education, work experience, etc.) that led you to pursue a degree in nutrition and/or nutrition research.

I received my undergraduate degree in Health & Exercise Science from Syracuse University. Thereafter, I became certified to Teach English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Prague, Czech Republic and taught English for a year. While abroad, I identified that my interests revolved around food, cooking, and science. This led me to pursue a master's degree in Human Nutrition at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. While studying at Drexel, I also worked as a graduate assistant in the Center for Nutrition & Performance where I was first introduced to the research and programmatic work of several of my mentors at Drexel. As a graduate assistant, I provided evidence-based sports nutrition information to university students and staff and helped develop a weekly weight-maintenance program for faculty and staff. I then completed my dietetic intern-

ship and worked as an inpatient dietitian. I returned to Drexel University as a project manager to oversee a multisite, multi-component, school-based childhood obesity intervention. This sparked my interest in research and led to the development of my research questions and the path toward my PhD.

3. What is the focus of your graduate work? Please describe one or two highlights of your research career thus far.

This past September, I defended my dissertation titled, "The Effect of a Multicomponent, School-based Obesity Intervention on the Health Outcomes and Behaviors of Children." My focus is decreasing obesity in childhood through school-based interventions. This carries into my current post-doctoral work by providing SNAP-Ed nutrition education programming to SNAP-eligible participants in schools and community centers. I am further interested in developing and evaluating effective school-based interventions for children and their parents. I am also very interested in the connection between school-based interventions

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and the home environment. Specifically, I am interested in discovering how to bridge the gap from programming directed to children in school to programming that involves families in the home and larger community.

4. What are your plans for the future (e.g., academia, government, and/or industry)?

My plans are still very much a work-in-progress. I am very interested in continuing my work in research, specifically with translating evidence-based recommendations into practical applications and evaluating such programs and interventions. However, I have also always enjoyed teaching and hope that it is a part of my future career path.

5. Do you have any advice or words of wisdom to share with students interested in the nutrition field?

My first bit of advice for a student would be to never say “no” to an opportunity. Make yourself present and available for professors or professionals in the field to call upon you to volunteer your time. You learn a tremendous amount by simply being present while also creating and building your network of connections. Secondly, let the path take you where it wants to go. Being open to new opportunities and career directions may open new doors that you didn’t even know existed. I never expected to pursue a PhD, let alone a career in research, but I was open to the possibilities that have taken me in a wonderful and exciting direction!

6. List any published work, if applicable.

Below is a sampling of my publications. I have two original manuscripts in development for publication in the next few months.

Published Review Articles:

AD Gilman, SL Volpe. Physical Activity in the Prevention of Childhood Obesity. *Pensar En Movimineto*. 2018; 16(2).

Published Abstracts:

A Duffine, EN Werner, BD Higgins, D Hanrahan, K Kochenour, PA Shewokis, SL Volpe. Anthropometric Changes in Elementary School Children Receiving Varying Amounts of Obesity Prevention Programming. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*. 2017; 50(5 Supplement).

AE Duffine, ML Bruneau Jr., EN Werner, BD Higgins, DE Hanrahan, K Kochenour, PA Shewokis, SL Volpe. Psychometric Validation of Physical Activity from the Youth Health Behavior Survey. *Int J Exerc Sci*. 2017; 9(5), Article 30. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/ijes/>. Presented at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of the American College of Sports Medicine, Harrisburg, PA, November 4-5, 2016.

A Duffine, EN Werner, BD Higgins, D Hanrahan, K Kochenour, PA Shewokis, SL Volpe. Assessment of Body Mass Index (BMI) z-Scores after One Year of a School-Based Health Intervention. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*. 2016; 48(5 Supplement 1):1037, 2016.

Published Book Chapters:

AE Duffine, SL Volpe. Nutritional Behaviors and Dietary Recommendations for Figure Skaters. In: *The Science of Figure Skating*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge; 2018: 69-84.

JA Nasser, N Dardarian, AD Gilman, Ranjan S. Nutrition and the Professional Voice. In: *Professional Voice: The Science and Art of Clinical Care*. 4th ed. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing; 2017:

