

GatherRD

**Asian
Americans
and Pacific
Islanders**

a member interest group of the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics



Newsletter of the Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders MIG

featuring

AAPI Updates

Legislative Updates

**Filipino American Farmers & A Fight for
Their Rights by Brianna dela Torre**

**Mushrooms: A Delicious & Nutritious
Ingredient In AAPI Cuisine by Robyn Wei**

Career Spotlight: Chunyun Xiao

Our Mission:

Equip and empower AAPI MIG members to be the leaders in culturally evidence-based nutrition practices for people of Asian and/or Pacific Islander origin.

Our Vision:

Enhance the nutrition care provided to people of Asian and/or Pacific Islander origin.

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www.aapimig.org



Christina Liew-Newville,
EdD, RDN, LD, FAND
**Chair, AAPI MIG
2024-2025**

Greetings AAPI members,

As we come to the close of an incredible year, I want to take a moment to reflect on all that we have accomplished together, and to celebrate our amazing AAPI MIG!

This year, we proudly launched our 2024–2026 Strategic Plan. Our vision is that every AAPI member is empowered to serve as the nutrition expert within their community. Our mission is to strengthen and elevate the voice of AAPI members within the Academy, the dietetics profession, and the communities we represent.

Thanks to your commitment and collaboration, we have made significant strides toward our goals. One of our top priorities has been to offer meaningful opportunities for members' engagement and professional development. Throughout the year, we hosted several networking events including the Recipe Demo, the Diabetes Dialogue Networking Event, and the Lunar New Year Networking Event. It was wonderful connecting with many of you at the AAPI MIG Reception during FNCE and learning Hula dancing with Levin! In addition, Jerianne Cusipag represented us at the 2nd annual Cocktails, Culture, and Conversation, a virtual collaborative networking event by several DPG/MIGs including DBC, COGA, IND, AAPI, NOBIDAN, Global, and NEHP.

For professional development, we hosted two impactful webinars: "Unlocking Leadership Potential for AAPI Dietitians/NDTRs" and "Diabetes in Pregnancy", to strengthen your leadership and clinical skills. About 30 members attended the Diabetes in Pregnancy webinar in April presented by Yanjie Yu, MS, RDN, CDCES, CDN. Her presentation highlights diabetes management during pregnancy, including diagnosis, monitoring, interventions, and recommendations for postpartum and preconception care.

We are working on several exciting initiatives, and I encourage you to participate. First, we are developing a Nutrition Resource Library specifically tailored to AAPI communities, and we are seeking volunteers from diverse AAPI backgrounds to contribute to this important project. Second, under the leadership of Dr. Yen Ang, we are conducting a research study on the dietary patterns of AAPI

Inside this Issue

Mushrooms: A Delicious & Nutritious Ingredient in AAPI Cuisine **by Robyn Wei**

Career Spotlight:
Chunyun Xiao

Filipino American
Farmworkers & A Fight
for Their Rights by
Brianna dela Torre

Research Updates

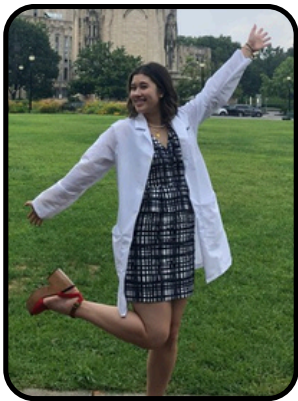
individuals. I invite you to support this effort by encouraging your family and friends to complete the survey. Third, we are seeking interested members to help form a Public Policy Subcommittee to strengthen our advocacy efforts and ensure that the voices of AAPI communities are represented in nutrition and public health policy discussions.

As we move forward, I encourage you to stay engaged - attend our events, volunteer, and share your unique talents. We look forward to celebrating AAPI Heritage Month with a special panel discussion on May 29, 2025, featuring inspiring AAPI leaders in dietetics.

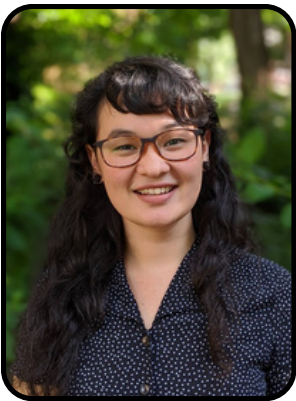
I am incredibly proud of all we have achieved together. Thank you for being part of the AAPI MIG. I am excited to see what we will accomplish in the year ahead!

Sincerely,
Christina Liew-Newville
EdD, RDN, LD, FAND
AAPI@eatright.org

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS



Brianna dela Torre
MS, RDN
Communications Chair
Co-Editor



Kimberly Baishnab
RDN, LD, CLS
Co-Editor

Hello AAPI members,

Welcome to AAPI Heritage Month! Kim, Robyn, and I are excited to share this issue of the newsletter and strengthen the voices of AAPI in the dietetics profession. Each year around this time I like to reflect on the impact we make in our communities to patients and clients alike by showing up as our authentic selves and representing our cultures and lived experiences.

I chose to highlight the farmer’s labor movement in this issue, a topic that this part of the food and nutrition realm that I feel deserves increased awareness. Food and nutrition is political and the AAPI community has been part of the conversation since the beginning.

If you want to get more engaged, here are a few tips -

- Engage with AAPI MIG and other members on our social media channels!
 - **Instagram:** @aapi_mig
 - **Facebook** and **LinkedIn:** Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders MIG
- Volunteer to write a piece for our next GatherRD newsletter! You can contact AAPI@eatright.org to learn more.
- Volunteer to become part of the Social Media Committee. Contact us via email or DM.
- Join networking events and webinars (video on!), and post your comments/questions in the chat!

Until next time!

Brianna dela Torre MS, RDN, CLC
Social Media & Communications Chair
Newsletter Co-Editor

AAPI UPDATES

AAPI HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION

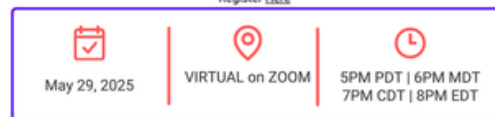
Join Edith, Nikki, and Sandra in the celebration of AAPI Heritage Month! This event is open to all and you are encouraged to share the information with friends and clients via socials. You are not required to be part of the MIG or an RDN/nDTR to join, and all are welcome!

AAPI HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION

honoring culture, community and careers

Join us in celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with an engaging and inspiring virtual event!

Live Panel Q&A - Get your questions answered during our moderated panel session.
Networking Opportunity - Connect with fellow RDs, students, and nutrition professionals in a casual and welcoming virtual space.
[Register Here](#)



Meet Our Panelists

AAPI dietitians will share their journeys, challenges, and triumphs in the field of nutrition and dietetics. Learn how their cultural identities have shaped their practice and advocacy.



Nikki Nies
MS, RD, LDN
Regulatory Affairs Associate Scientist
PepsiCo



Sandra Chien
MS, RD
Consultant Dietitian
Nutrition Therapy Essentials



Edith Yang
RD, CSR, CLT, FAND
Private Practice Dietitian
Healthy Mission Dietitians, Inc.

AAPI Special Election - Your Vote Matters!

The AAPI MIG is running a special election to fill the Nominating / Awards Committee Chair Elect position. Please take a moment to cast your vote in this election. We have one candidate running to fill the position; please review her brief bio and [cast your vote](#) by May 21, 2025 at 5:00 pm CST.

Meet Nikki Nies, MS, RD, LD

Nikki is an award-winning Regulatory Affairs Associate Scientist at PepsiCo where she supports brands' accuracy, substantiates claims and ensures compliance to FDA standards. Her background includes work in the K-12 space, retail and long-term care. She is passionate about engaging with others to advocate and advance the dietetic profession. Nikki seizes the challenge to provide creative solutions and to showcase the member value of the DPG. Since being an Academy Student Advisory Committee Member, Nikki has been an active Academy member serving in a variety of leadership roles on the DPG/MIG level and her Texas affiliate. Specific to AAPI MIG, she has been an active member since the formation from CADN and FADAN, serving a two-year term as AAPI Chair. She is dedicated to supporting the leaders of tomorrow, celebrating AAPI's accomplishments and connecting them to resources to be their best.

FROM THE ACADEMY

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Celebrates RDN Day with Dietitian Demo on Capitol Hill

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, recognized the essential role of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) with a special Dietitian Demo on Capitol Hill, hosted in celebration of Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day on March 12.

The three-hour event, open to all members of Congress and congressional staffers, featured breakout sessions and one-on-one consultations led by food and nutrition experts and Academy members Shannon Helfert, MS, RD, CSG, LDN, FAND, Carlie Saint-Laurent Beaucejour, MS, RDN, and Christina Badaracco, MPH, RDN, LDN. It also included keynote addresses from Dr. Andrew Bremer, Director of the National Institutes of Health Office of Nutrition Research and Rep. Brett Guthrie, R-Ky, chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

"Many people know what 'RDN' stands for, but not everyone understands what they do. RDNs work tirelessly to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities by providing evidence-based guidance and empowering people to make informed food choices, manage chronic diseases and lead healthier lives," said Livleen Gill, 2024-2025 Academy President. "Today's Demo was a valuable opportunity for lawmakers and staffers to experience RDN expertise firsthand and understand why they must be involved in discussions about federal food and nutrition policies."

"As RDNs, our work is centered on improving individual and public health outcomes and administering vital nutrition care, and today we were able to show Congress how we fit into the health care system," Gill said. "There really is no better time than today, RDN Day 2025, to show our skills as trusted experts to the very people who help shape legislation pertaining to American food and nutrition. This is an important step toward making a difference in our nation's health."

[Click here for more information.](#)

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Launches Online Hub to Counter Misinformation about Nutrition

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ("the Academy"), today announced the launch of its new online resource hub dedicated to countering misinformation and uninformed opinions by promoting science-based nutrition.

The hub features Academy research, statements, practice trends and action alerts highlighting the latest evidence-based findings in nutrition science. Designed as a go-to resource for health professionals, policymakers and the public, the hub provides credible, research-backed insights to counter misinformation and ensure that nutrition policies and recommendations are grounded in science.

"Misinformation about nutrition is rampant, and the voices of unqualified individuals often overshadow evidence-based expertise," said Academy CEO Dr. Wylecia Wiggs Harris. "As the association representing the largest number of food and nutrition professionals, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a responsibility to combat misinformation with facts and ensure the public has access to credible, science-backed guidance when it comes to nutrition."

"This resource hub is not just a tool for dietitians, it's a platform for anyone seeking reliable information to make informed choices about their health," said Livleen Gill 2024-2025 President of the Academy. "We are at a turning point in American health care, and we hope this resource cuts through the growing noise online and in our communities and makes reliable, evidence-based nutrition information more accessible and comprehensible for all."

[The hub is available here.](#)

[Click here for more information.](#)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Advocate for strong nutrition and health policy standards through the Academy's [Action Center](#). Enter your contact information once and it will be saved for future action alerts, including your U.S. Representatives and Senators. Each alert has a pre-filled message that can be tailored to your unique experience in the field of dietetics.

Tell Us How a Dietitian Has Helped You!

Sharing your nutrition story is helpful to others who can benefit from increased access to nutrition care. Your unique story personalizes the impact nutrition can have on health and helps legislators understand the need to address barriers to care. There are many opportunities for your story to make a difference -- from writing a blog post or an op-ed to sharing your experience on Capitol Hill.

Take action today by filling out the form here. If an opportunity arises to share your story, someone from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics will reach out to you about next steps.



Sign Up to Receive Action Alerts from the Academy

Take action today by filling out the form here to receive text alerts and/or email legislative updates from the Academy about ways you can get involved!

Action Needed: Tell Congress to Oppose Changes to SNAP and School Lunch Program

Leaders in Congress are developing legislation that would make changes to a variety of federal policies. As a part of this process, these leaders are considering how to offset costs through revisions to other federal programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the National School Lunch Program. Changes to either of these programs would be putting millions of children and families at risk of food insecurity which remains a chronic issue in our country.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics members must act to protect these essential nutrition programs.

Take Action Now

We ask that you contact your representatives and urge them to oppose any detrimental changes to these critical programs. Your voice can make a significant impact in ensuring that these programs continue to support those in need.



[Click here for more information.](#)

Filipino American Farmers & A Fight for Their Rights

written by Brianna dela Torre MS, RDN, CLC

Larry Itliong was born in 1913 in Pangasinan, Philippines and immigrated to the US at the age of 15 in 1929. Larry worked as a farm laborer in Alaskan salmon canneries facing poverty and racism, and in this time saw the power of working together with his fellow laborers to advance their cause.¹ He used his charisma to become an effective labor organizer and champion for social justice, eventually organizing the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) in 1954.² Union leaders looked to Larry's success in recruiting new members and asked him to move from Stockton to Delano California to organize Filipino grape workers. On September 8, 1965 AWOC decided to strike against the Delano California and led a walk off to demand federal minimum wage and better working conditions.



LARRY ITLIONG

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/larry-itliong-delano-grape-strike>



Manongs working in the fields

<https://www.sjpl.org/blogs/post/looking-back-filipino-americans-in-santa-clara-valley/>

The strike was a bold move as few strikes of this size had been attempted and growers had their own tactics for combatting the strikes like hiring thugs to break up union activities and divide the workforce with racial disputes.² At same time the Filipino farmworkers under Itliong were working towards better working conditions and pay, the Mexican American farm workers labored under the same conditions at the same farms.

Filipino American Farmers & A Fight for Their Rights

written by Brianna dela Torre MS, RDN, CLC

The Mexican Americans organized as the National Farmworkers Association (NFWA) under Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, and were not initially planning on striking³. Itliong reached out to Chavez and Huerta who were initially unsure, citing doubts of the movement's strength to take on grape growers. Itliong saw the value and the in working together for more fair treatment and working across racial differences to achieve common goals.³ Twelve days later the NFA joined the strike to begin the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott. The event lasted for five years, and in 1966 the AWOC and NFWA merged to become the United Farm Workers (UFW) with Chavez and Itliong at the helm.⁴ In 1970 the strike ended when the UFW achieved collective bargaining agreements with several grape growers and improved lives of over 10,000 workers.²



Larry Itliong & Cesar Chavez

<https://iexaminer.org/in-review-delano-manongs-a-story-of-filipino-perseverance/>



Signage for the Agbayani Village

<https://welgadigitalarchive.omeka.net/exhibits/show/agbayani-village>

Itliong worked for the UFW until 1971, but continued to work for Filipino Americans until his death at 63 in 1977. His legacy continues with the funding he secured for the construction of the Paula Agbayani Retirement Village in Delano that provides housing and support for retired Filipino farmworkers since 1974.⁴ In 2013 the National Park Service identified two sites in Delano, California for potential inclusion into the National Park system for relevance to the Filipino farmworker story and include the Agbayani Retirement Village.² The history of manong workers is a cultural touchstone for the Filipino community and their first years in the United States. It serves as a reminder of strength in coming together for a joined cause not only within one race or cultural identity, but with those who seek to achieve the same goal and strengthen the community.

Mushrooms: A Delicious & Nutritious Ingredient In AAPI Cuisine

written by *Yinying (Robyn) Wei, MCN, RD, LD, CPT*

Mushrooms have long been treasured in many Asian and Pacific Islander food traditions for their earthy aroma, rich umami flavor, and health-promoting properties. From Chinese hot pots and Japanese miso soups to Korean stews and Filipino stir-fries, mushrooms are a staple that connects generations through food. A recent study shows that blending mushrooms into traditional meat-based dishes can help reduce calorie and sodium intake while boosting vitamin D and potassium levels.¹ Let's explore the types of mushrooms commonly used in AAPI communities, their nutritional benefits, and creative ways to enjoy them.

Types of Mushrooms

There are more than 50,000 species of mushrooms in the world and over 20 species are edible.² Here are some common types of edible mushrooms:

Portobello mushroom: this type has a big size, which can be as big as your palm, so it's perfect for stuffing and grilling. Besides, portobello is commonly added to Italian cuisines like pasta due to its strong, meaty flavors.

Baby Bella mushroom: this type can be used interchangeably as the white button mushrooms. They have darker colors and stronger flavors.



Oyster mushroom



Portobello mushroom



Shiitake mushroom

Shiitake mushroom: recognized for its brown cap and woody flavor, shiitake is a cornerstone in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cooking. It adds depth to broths, rice, and noodle dishes.

Oyster mushroom: just like its name, oyster mushroom looks like an oyster, and it's common in Chinese and Japanese cuisines.² They have a smooth texture and light flavor.

Enoki mushroom: they have tiny white caps with long stems and growing in a cluster. Enoki mushrooms are also common in Asian cuisines, especially in soups.³

Maitake mushroom: "maitake" means dancing in Japanese.⁴ The mushroom was said to be found in the wild after people danced. This mushroom has an earthy aroma and a gamy flavor. They are often grown in clusters and added to soups.

Morel mushroom: this spongy-shaped, strong meaty-flavored mushroom is rare and expensive.⁵ You need to clean it well and cook it before eating. Usually, Morel mushrooms can be sautéed or made into soups.



Enoki mushroom



Morel Mushroom



Maitake mushroom

Mushrooms: A Delicious & Nutritious Ingredient In AAPI Cuisine



Mushroom Products In The Market

Fresh Mushroom

Found in most Asian grocery stores and farmers' markets, fresh mushrooms are best stored in the fridge for up to 7 days. Whole mushrooms keep longer than pre-sliced. Cooked mushrooms only last 3-5 days in the fridge .⁶

Dried Mushroom

A pantry essential in many AAPI households. Used in broths and braised dishes, dried mushrooms are rehydrated in hot water before use, preserving their deep umami. Dried mushroom can last 6-12 months or longer. These mushrooms should keep away from the sun and moisture to keep them fresh.

Canned Mushroom

Canned mushrooms, especially straw mushrooms, are popular in Southeast Asian cooking. Marinated mushrooms in vinegar or soy-based brine are often used in side dishes or banchan. Canned mushrooms are shelf-stable and can last 3-5 years if unopen.⁷ Once opened, the mushrooms need to be transferred into other sealed containers and stored in the fridge for freezer like fresh mushrooms.

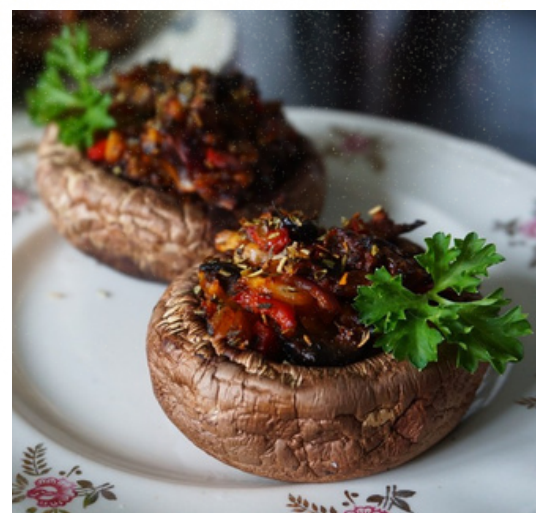
Mushroom Supplements

Mushroom is a functional food, meaning it has potentially positive effects on health beyond basic nutrition. Mushroom extract and supplements become so popular today. Research hasn't fully studied the effectiveness of mushroom supplements. Some evidence showed that compounds in mushrooms have antitumor, anti-inflammatory, and antiallergic effects.⁸ Other research also showed that some mushroom supplements have positive effects in patients with cancer, high blood pressure, and high blood lipid.⁹ The mushrooms made into extract or supplements can be edible or inedible. However, further studies about the underlying mechanisms and efficacy of mushroom supplements are needed. Traditional Chinese medicine and modern wellness movements alike highlight mushrooms like Reishi, Lion's Mane, and Cordyceps for their immune-supportive and anti-inflammatory effects.¹⁰ The forms can be pill, powder, and liquid. Usually, people can eat it alone or add it to foods or drinks.

Innovative Mushroom Products

Since many people love mushrooms' special woody, meaty, or umami flavors, mushrooms are made into many innovative products in the market, including mushroom chips, mushroom-infused coffees, mushroom seasonings, mushroom jerky, etc. The market is growing because more people realize the nutrition contents and benefits of mushrooms for health. Not only can these products last longer than fresh mushrooms, but also people can enjoy mushrooms in other types of foods or drinks.

Robyn's Mushroom Cooking Ideas



Mushrooms have a special flavor called Umami. This is a good reason why mushrooms are so popular in our daily cuisine because of its unique umami flavor.

Cooking Ideas from AAPI Kitchens:

- Stir-fry mushrooms with bok choy, tofu, garlic, and sesame oil.
- Add enoki and shiitake to miso soup or Korean soybean paste stew.
- Grill portobello mushrooms with gochujang or soy-mirin glaze.
- Braise dried mushrooms with soy sauce, ginger, and rock sugar for a classic Chinese side dish.

Don't eat mushrooms you pick in the wild if you don't know whether mushrooms are poisonous. Before using mushrooms to cook, you need to wash or rinse the mushrooms thoroughly. If you need to cut mushrooms, use a separate cutting board and knife. When cooking the mushrooms, you need to make sure the internal cooking temperature reaches at least 135 °F. Otherwise, you may get food poisoning.

Nutrition Facts

One cup of sliced common white mushroom has 4 g total carbohydrates and 4 g protein with only 20 calories.¹¹ It contains a significant amount of Vitamin B Complex which is essential for brain function, cell metabolism, and cell growth. It also contains other essential nutrients such as potassium, iron, and copper. Moreover, since the mushroom gets exposed to the sunlight, it can be a good source of vitamin D which is an important nutrient for bone health.

Final Thoughts

For AAPI communities and beyond, mushrooms are more than just a side dish—they're a bridge between heritage and health. As a nutritious, plant-forward food with savory appeal, mushrooms are a versatile choice for anyone seeking to honor their roots while nourishing their bodies.

Generic - White Mushroom, Sliced

Servings: 1.0		1 cup	
Calories	20	Sodium	6 mg
Total Fat	0 g	Potassium	-- mg
Saturated	-- g	Total Carbs	4 g
Polyunsaturated	-- g	Dietary Fiber	1 g
Monounsaturated	-- g	Sugars	2 g
Trans	-- g	Protein	4 g
Cholesterol	-- mg		
Vitamin A	--%	Calcium	--%
Vitamin C	4%	Iron	4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Information from myfitnesspal.com

CAREER SPOTLIGHT



Chungyun Xiao

MCN, RD-AP, CSO, CNSC, CMI, FAND

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I grew up in Guangzhou, Canton, China, a city that is famous for its food, as Cantonese cuisine being one of China's eight major culinary traditions. My family also likes traveling and trying local food on the road, which inspires me to know more about what I am actually eating and study what food would do on the human body. Thus, I moved to Florida in 2009 for college and majored in Food Science and Human Nutrition. Now I work as a Registered Dietitian - Advanced Practitioner of oncology and nutrition support specialty for the most complex and acutely ill patients at one of the nation's top 10 hospitals and cancer centers.

What foods or food-related customs from your culture do you love?

Cantonese cuisine, or Teochew cuisine as one of its three major categories based on Canton's dialect and where my family is actually from, is well known for its seafood and vegetarian dishes. Its use of flavoring is much less heavy-handed than most other Chinese cuisines and depends much on the freshness and quality of the ingredients for taste and flavor. As a delicate cuisine, sauce and oil are not often used in large quantities and there is a relatively heavy emphasis on poaching, steaming and braising.

Hometown: Guangzhou, China

Present Location: Redwood City, California

Education:

- Master in Clinical Nutrition from University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- M.S. in Biomedical Sciences from Stony Brook University
- B.S. in Food Science and Human Nutrition from University of Florida

Current Position/employer:

Clinical Dietitian III, Stanford Health Care

CAREER SPOTLIGHT

Take us through a typical day in your job!

Loads of nutrition support and medication management in patients with advanced incurable cancer, along with more parenteral over enteral nutrition as tumor often occupies these patients' abdomen. Just like doctors, NPs, and PAs, discussing the goal of care or advanced care planning directly with patients and families is also typical of my job.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I love helping people understand that some patients with rapidly progressing disease that is suboptimally responsive to antineoplastic treatment may not benefit from aggressive or invasive nutrition interventions to improve nutrition status, increase survival, or improve quality of life. Patients at this stage of life should eat and drink as they desire, and restrictive diets should be discontinued.

How did you obtain your current position?

In 2023 after 5 years being a dietitian, I would like to advance my career at one of the nation's top hospitals so I applied online on every opening on the career website of those U.S. News Best Hospitals Honor Roll. Stanford Health Care (continue)

(cont.) had an opening for inpatient oncology so I went through 3 rounds of phone screening, case studies, and panel interview. Eventually, I moved from Texas to California for my dream job to help patients with advanced or end stage cancer to survive without starvation.

What challenges have you faced in this field and how have you overcome them?

In 2024, only 16% of nutrition and dietetics professionals identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian, or Other, which was down from 17% in 2020, according to the report on the Academy/Commission on Dietetic Registration 2024 Needs Satisfaction Survey. At the same time, recent U.S. Census reported that 41.6% of the U.S. population identified as Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, or Two or More races. Representation of various races and ethnicities in medical care leads to improved patient outcomes or improved perceptions of nutrition care received. I am working on conducting research studies to identify and characterize the factors influencing the career advancements of nutrition and dietetic professionals who identify as black, indigenous, and persons of color (BIPOC).

CAREER SPOTLIGHT

What advice would you give to aspiring dietitians?

Be proud of your cultural background. Everyone's difference can have a significant influence on food and beverage choices. Customizing diets to reflect specific

cultures and traditions is an important strategy to help communities across this country eat and enjoy a healthy dietary pattern. Nutrient-dense but culturally relevant foods and beverages are part of all of the food groups. Being a professional with nutrition expertise and specific cultural foodways can help people prepare foods healthfully while retaining heritage.

The topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion have been very important recently. How do you think the AAPI dietetics community can contribute to this conversation?

The AAPI dietetics community plays a vital role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the field of nutrition. It is essential for us to share our experiences in incorporating cultural foods into dietary guidelines and recommendations, making them more relevant and practical for diverse populations.

(cont.) Currently, many nutrition guidelines are developed from a Western-centric perspective, often based on research conducted in non-AAPI populations. As a result, these recommendations may not fully align with the food preferences, traditions, or dietary habits of many Asian communities. If we do not actively provide feedback and share our experiences, our unique nutritional needs may go unrecognized, and individuals may struggle to apply dietary guidance in a way that is both culturally appropriate and sustainable. By advocating for the integration of culturally diverse foods into dietary recommendations, we can ensure that nutrition guidance is inclusive and applicable to a broader range of individuals. Through education, research, and representation, we can help shape a more equitable and culturally sensitive approach to nutrition.

Do you know a dietetics student, RDN, or NDTR who would like to be featured in our newsletter?

Contact us via social media or send an email to AAPI@eatright.org!





RESEARCH UPDATES



Plant-Based Meat Analogs and Cardiometabolic Health: An Asian Perspective

[Click here to read the full article](#)

The researchers in this study aimed to evaluate whether plant-based meat analogs (PBMA), when substituted for animal-based meats, could positively impact cardiometabolic health in Asian adults with elevated diabetes risk. The trial was conducted in Singapore and is particularly relevant for Asian populations, who may be genetically predisposed to metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes.



In this 8-week randomized controlled trial, 89 Chinese adults aged 30–70 were assigned to one of two diets: a plant-based meat diet (PBMD) featuring popular brands like Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, and OmniFoods, or an animal-based meat diet (ABMD) using minimally processed chicken, pork, and beef. Both diets were designed to provide similar amounts of protein—about 2.5 servings per day—while keeping other parts of the participants' usual diets unchanged.

The primary outcome was LDL cholesterol, with secondary outcomes including fasting glucose, fructosamine, insulin, lipid profiles, inflammatory markers (hsCRP), ambulatory blood pressure, and continuous glucose monitoring (CGMS) data.

At 8 weeks, LDL cholesterol levels were not significantly different between the PBMD and ABMD groups. Similarly, no significant changes were observed in total cholesterol, HDL, or triglycerides. In contrast to expectations based on traditional plant-based dietary patterns, the PBMA intervention did not yield lipid-lowering effects.

However, participants in the animal-based meat group (ABMD) had better glucose regulation. On CGMS, they spent significantly more time in the healthy glucose range (median 94.1% vs. 86.5%) and had lower glycemic risk scores. They also showed a greater nocturnal dip in blood pressure—a good sign, as reduced nighttime dipping has been linked to higher cardiovascular risk.

Dietary intake data revealed higher consumption of fiber, potassium, and sodium in the PBMD group, largely attributable to the formulation of PBMA. Notably, laboratory nutrient analysis showed that many PBMA products contained lower protein content and higher carbohydrate levels than indicated on their labels. This discrepancy may explain the observed increase in glycemic variability and attenuated blood pressure responses in the PBMD group.



RESEARCH UPDATES



Both groups saw small but significant improvements in fructosamine levels (a short-term marker of glucose control) and β -cell function (HOMA- β)—but these changes were similar across diets.

The findings emphasize an important distinction: PBMAAs are not nutritionally equivalent to traditional plant-based foods like legumes, tofu, or whole grains. While PBMAAs offer convenience and may reduce environmental impact, they are still highly processed products—often higher in sodium and refined starches—and should not be assumed to provide the same health benefits.

For AAPI dietitians and students counseling communities with elevated cardiometabolic risk, this study highlights the importance of reading beyond the “plant-based” label. Nutrient quality, degree of processing, and cultural dietary patterns all matter when assessing whether a food supports metabolic health.

Bottom line? PBMAAs are not a one-size-fits-all solution. They may have a role in plant-forward eating patterns, but their health impact requires closer scrutiny—particularly in populations already vulnerable to metabolic diseases.



SOURCES & CITATIONS

Filipino American Farmers & A Fight for Their Rights

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