Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders a member interest group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Newsletter of the Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders MIG



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Yanjie Yu MS, RDN, CDCES, CDN

Chair Elect, AAPI MIG 2024-2025

Inside this Issue

Shirley Liu: Blending AAPI Flavors in Global Cuisine

From the Academy

Legislative Updates

Student Spotlight: **Yinying Wei**

Research Updates



Greetings AAPI members,

I hope this message finds you in great spirits! I am excited to introduce myself to our wonderful community as the Chair-elect of the AAPI MIG for 2024-2025. It is a true honor to join you on this journey!

As we welcome the New Year, I wish you all happiness and good health! A heartfelt shoutout to our amazing members-both new friends and longtime supporters. Your unwavering dedication to health and nutrition is truly inspiring, and we appreciate each and every one of you!

Our vibrant community is filled with energy, and we invite you to become more involved! We are seeking enthusiastic volunteers to join our Executive Committee. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to help shape exciting events, engaging programs, and initiatives that celebrate our passion for health, wellness, and delicious food!

Why volunteer?

Make an Impact: Join us in creating programs that uplift AAPI members in nutrition and dietetics.

Share Your Expertise: Your knowledge from clinical practice, food service, academia, or community outreach can lead to meaningful change!

Connect & Collaborate: Meet and work with fellow members who share your passion for food and health.

If you are interested in joining us, we would love to have you! Please email us at AAPI@eatright.org or sign up here:

www.aapimig.org/members-only/get-involved. Together, let's achieve amazing things!

Thank you for being such an essential part of our community. I look forward to inspiring and working alongside you!

> Sincerely, Yanjie Yu

AAPI@eatright.org

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS



MS. RDN Communications Chair Co-Editor



Kimberly Baishnab RDN, LD, CLS Co-Editor

Hello AAPI members.

Bri and I are excited to share with you the latest and greatest events and information within the AAPI community. I love putting together this newsletter for all of you in our MIG as it allows me a chance to connect with our leaders and the Academy as a whole to find out the newest information to share with you.

We have had several professional and networking events recently - I hope you have been able to find ways to get engaged with our remarkable group and get the most from our community.

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

- Engage with AAPI MIG and other members on our social media channels!
 - o Instagram: @aapi mig
 - Facebook and LinkedIn: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders MIG
- Volunteer to write a piece for our next GatheRD newsletter! You can contact AAPI@eatright.org to learn more.
- Join networking events and webinars (video on!), and post your comments/questions in the chat!
- Consider applying to join the AAPI MIG leadership team! We are always in need of more committee members, or you can apply for an elected position as well!
- Post questions on the AAPI Discussion Board

Until next time! Kimberly Baishnab RDN, LD, CLS Newsletter Co-Editor

AAPI UPDATES

WEBINAR WITH MANJU KARKARE MS, RDN, LDN, CLT, FAND

A huge thank you to Manju for sharing her knowledge and expertise with the AAPI members for this event. We had a great turnout and look forward to future collaborations with Manju in the near future.

If you know of other nutrition professionals or Academy groups looking to host webinars with AAPI, please send an email to aapi@eatright.org or message us on one of our other social media platforms.



Manju Karkare MS, RDN, ĹDN, CLT, FAND

MORE AAPI UPDATES

LUNAR NEW YEAR NETWORKING EVENT

Thank you to all who attended the Lunar New Year Networking event this past February! We always appreciate attendance to these events as it lets us get to know the members of our MIG, and learn something new. For anyone who was not able to attend, but still wants to learn more about the event or volunteering with AAPI, contact us through our email aapi@eatright.org.

Special thanks to Emily Wu with the Membership Committee for creating the slide deck for this event!



AAPI SPECIAL ELECTION - JUNE 2025

AAPI will be holding a special election in June for Chair-Elect and Nominating Chair Elect. If you are interested in this position or any other roles within the Executive Committee, please email AAPI@eatright.org.



FROM THE ACADEMY

Top Health Experts Release New Drink Recommendations for Kids and Teens' **Overall Health**

Experts from leading health and organizations recommend kids and teens drink plain water, plain pasteurized milk, and limited amounts of 100% fruit and vegetable juice for optimal nutrition and hydration. Other beverages like plant-based milk alternatives and flavored milks should be limited, while sugar-sweetened beverages, beverages with non-sugar sweeteners, and beverages with caffeine or other stimulants should be avoided.

evidence-based recommendations developed as part of a collaboration by experts from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy), American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association (AHA) under the leadership of Healthy Eating Research (HER) and with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The same organizations convened in 2019 to release healthy beverage guidelines for 0- to 5-year-olds that are used by clinicians, registered dietitian nutritionists, dentists, public departments, parents, and caregivers across the country.

"We all want our kids to grow up healthy, and research shows that what kids and teens drink is an important part of a balanced diet, not just what they eat. But with so many drink products on the market right now, it can be hard for families to figure out what's healthy and what's not," said Megan Elsener Lott, MPH, RDN, deputy director of HER, which convened the expert panel. "These recommendations provide a gold standard based on the latest research and can serve as goals that families work toward together."

The full recommendations and accompanying technical found report can be at healthyeatingresearch.org. This site also contains a set of infographics in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Tagalog covering different topics included in the recommendations.

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Survey Reveals Greatest Barriers Proper **Nutrition, Foods They Eat and Limit Daily**

A survey conducted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics revealed that socioeconomic statusincluding income. education, occupation, employment status and living conditions-may be the most significant barrier to adequate nutrition and health in the United States, from the perspective of credentialed nutrition professionals. The survey, conducted during the Academy's Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo®, polled more than 230 registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered (NDTR), and students studying nutrition.

The survey showed the second biggest lifestyle factor that impacts nutrition access is the influence of social media trends, such as fad diets and mukbang videos (17.3%). Survey respondents said other top factors are food insecurity (15.6%) and busy schedules/limited time for home-cooked meals (15.2%).

"Nutrition and dietetics professionals see these roadblocks firsthand through their work with patients, clients and organizations," said the Academy's 2024-2025 President Livleen Gill, MBA, RDN, LDN, FAND. "The results of this survey can assist the Academy in supporting an evidencebased practice through relevant resources."

"Nutrition is not one-size-fits-all, and healthy food choices can vastly differ from person to person," Gill said. "However, it's helpful to see the kinds of foods qualified nutrition professionals generally recommend to maintain an eating pattern that supports long-term health. Their choices and guidance are grounded in years of continued nutrition education and training to align with the most current scientific research available."

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.

Urge Congress to Avoid the Impact of a Federal Shutdown, Extend Critical Waivers and Protect Nutrition Programs

The federal government faces a potential shutdown unless a funding agreement is reached before March 14, 2025. Additionally, key health programs such as Medicare telehealth waivers, community health center funding, the Special Diabetes Program, and other vital health extenders will expire or face funding lapses on March 31, 2025, without congressional action. These programs are critical to patient care, public health, and nutrition security.

As a Registered Dietitian, your voice is essential in urging Congress to act now to prevent a government shutdown and secure extensions for these vital programs. A shutdown would jeopardize federal nutrition initiatives like SNAP, WIC, and Child Nutrition Programs, putting millions of vulnerable families, children, and patients at risk.

The Academy's team in Washington, D.C. is working to highlight the significant impacts a shutdown would have on Academy members, health care systems, and nutrition programs. But we need your help!

Take action today by contacting your members of Congress and emphasizing the urgency of funding these programs and preventing disruptions to health and nutrition services. Let's work together to protect the well-being of our communities and ensure these programs remain uninterrupted.



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.

Culinary Integration: Blending AAPI Flavors in Global Cuisine

written by Shirley Liu

edited by Brianna dela Torre

Fusion cuisine is everywhere these days. Whether it's at trendy restaurants or in home kitchens, blending flavors and techniques from different culinary traditions has become a global favorite. At the heart of this movement are Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) cuisines, known for their rich, diverse flavors that bring a unique twist to dishes from all over the world.

Let's explore how AAPI ingredients and techniques are reshaping global culinary landscapes and how you can bring these exciting flavors into your own cooking.

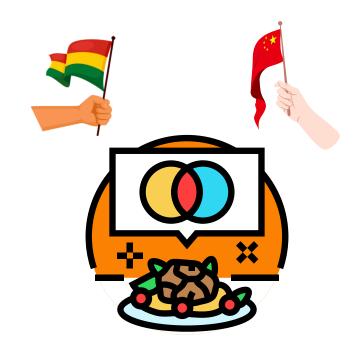
Why AAPI Ingredients Are Perfect for Fusion

AAPI cuisines bring a wealth of flavor diversity and versatility to the table. Their signature sweet, sour, salty, spicy, and umami profiles resonate universally, and make them ideal for creative adaptations. Ingredients like soy sauce, fish sauce, miso, and coconut milk aren't just staples of their native cuisines. They can be transformative additions to global recipes.

For example, soy sauce can be swapped for salt in French cooking to add depth, while tamarind paste provides a tangy kick to Latin American salsas. Coconut milk, a foundation of many Southeast Asian dishes, works great in Caribbean curries or even dairy-free desserts. The possibilities are endless.

How to Incorporate AAPI Ingredients at Home

If you're new to fusion cooking, there are plenty of easy ways to experiment with AAPI flavors in everyday dishes. For a quick upgrade to a classic grilled cheese, try adding tangy, spicy kimchi for an extra punch of umami. A dash of fish sauce in Italian pasta sauces might sound unexpected, but it adds a savory depth that enhances the overall flavor.



And if you're looking to lighten up creamy soups, swapping heavy cream for coconut milk creates a rich, velvety texture with a subtle tropical note. As you start blending these flavors, it's important to approach fusion cooking with respect and curiosity. Take the time to learn about the cultural significance and traditional uses of each ingredient.

Understanding their origins can help you create dishes that are both authentic and innovative.

Fusion cuisine celebrates the endless possibilities of blending traditions, flavors, and techniques. AAPI ingredients are at the heart of many innovative dishes, which offers rich opportunities for culinary creativity. As you experiment with these flavors in your kitchen, remember to approach with respect, curiosity, and a willingness to learn.

Share your fusion creations with us on social media using #AAPIFusion and let us know how AAPI flavors have inspired your cooking journey.

Shirley's Coconut Matcha Tiramisu

Courtesy of Shirley Liu

This Matcha Coconut Tiramisu Cake is a fusion of earthy matcha and creamy coconut that offers a fresh twist on the classic Italian dessert. With its light sponge, rich mascarpone cream, and a hint of tropical sweetness, it's perfect for any occasion.

Ingredients

CAKE LAYER

- 11/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon matcha powder
- 1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup coconut oil, melted
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup coconut milk

MATCHA SOAKING SYRUP

- 1/2 cup hot water
- 1 tablespoon matcha powder
- 2 tablespoons sugar



Photo Courtesy of What Grandma Ate

MASCARPONE CREAM

- 8 oz mascarpone cheese
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

TOPPING

- 2 tablespoons matcha powder (for dusting)
- Toasted coconut flakes (optional)

Instructions

Prepare the Cake:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and line a 9x13-inch baking pan.
- o In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, matcha powder, and shredded coconut.
- In another bowl, whisk coconut oil and sugar until well combined. Add eggs one at a time, followed by vanilla extract.
- Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, alternating with coconut milk. Mix until just combined.
- Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let it cool completely.

Make the Matcha Soaking Syrup:

• Dissolve matcha powder and sugar in hot water. Set aside to cool.

Prepare the Mascarpone Cream:

- In a mixing bowl, beat mascarpone cheese until smooth. In a separate bowl, whip heavy cream and powdered sugar until soft peaks form.
- Gently fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone cheese. Add vanilla extract and mix until combined.

4. Assemble the Tiramisu:

- Slice the cake horizontally into two thin layers. Place one layer in the bottom of a serving dish.
- Brush generously with the matcha soaking syrup. Spread half of the mascarpone cream over the cake layer.
- Place the second cake layer on top, brush with syrup, and spread the remaining mascarpone cream evenly.

5. Finish and Chill:

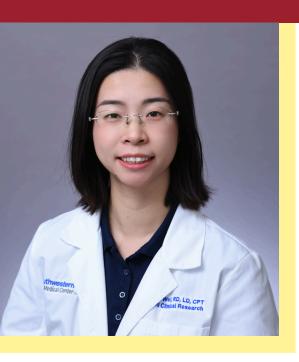
- Dust the top with matcha powder using a fine sieve. Garnish with toasted coconut flakes if desired.
- Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight for best results.



SHIRLEY LIU

Shirley is pursuing a Master of Science in Nutrition, Healthspan, and Longevity at the University of Southern California with the goal of becoming an RDN. She earned her undergraduate degree in Nutritional Science from the University of British Columbia in 2022. Her experience as a dietitian assistant and diet technician in hospital settings showed her firsthand how nutrition plays a critical role in disease management and patient outcomes.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Hometown: Yunnan, China

Present Location: Dallas, Texas

Education: B.S. in clinical nutrition at UC Davis, master's in clinical nutrition at UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW), and currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Applied Clinical Research at UTSW

Ujnying (Robyn) Wei RD, LD, CPT

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I was born and raised in Yunnan, China, a region known for its diverse cuisine and rich cultural heritage. In 2015, I came to the United States to pursue higher education, an experience that has broadened my perspective both personally and professionally. I worked as a dietitian for two years, with one year in weight management with the bariatric population and another year in the inpatient setting. Now I have come back to school to earn a Ph.D. in Applied Clinical Research. I am passionate about advancing our understanding of non-pharmaceutical interventions in chronic disease management, particularly in hypertension. My research focuses on assessing different dietary patterns on exercise capacity and cardiovascular functions. Outside of my academic and professional pursuits, I enjoy exploring different cuisines and engaging in cross-cultural conversations about food and health.

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

I have a deep love for the wild mushrooms that grow in my hometown. Yunnan, often referred to as the "Spring City" due to its mild climate, is home to an incredible variety of mushrooms. These mushrooms, known for their umami flavor and nutritional benefits, play a central role in our local cuisine. However, foraging for them requires knowledge and caution, as some varieties can be toxic if misidentified or improperly prepared. Mushroom season is an exciting time, as we prepare them in numerous waysstir-frying, steaming, boiling, adding them to hot pot, or even enjoying some varieties raw. Not only are they a rich source of vitamin D, but they are also packed with antioxidants, making them a nutritious and flavorful ingredient in our diet.

What led you to study dietetics?

When I first started college, I was unsure about my career path. Initially, I pursued biology, but I soon realized that it was not the right fit for me because I wanted something more practical and

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

applicable to daily life. A classmate majoring in clinical nutrition suggested I take an introductory nutrition course, and from the very first class, I was hooked. Learning about macronutrients and how food directly impacts health was fascinating. I also became more aware of my own family's eating habits, which included high amounts of salt and saturated fat from lard. I attempted to make my parents and grandparents eat healthier because hypertension runs in my family, but I quickly realized how challenging it was to change longstanding habits. This personal experience solidified my decision to become a dietitian, as I wanted to help others to make behavioral changes and improve their long-term health.

What do you like most about studying dietetics?

I love that dietetics is both evidence-based and world, practical. In today's misinformation about nutrition spreads rapidly through social media, it is important for we professionals to spread true information. As a dietitian, I value the ability to critically evaluate research and translate complex nutritional concepts into recommendations that people can understand and apply in their daily lives. Nutrition education and counseling require not only scientific knowledge but also effective communication skills, which I continuously strive to develop.

How did you come to the decision to pursue a PhD? What is research like as a dietitian?

I decided to pursue a Ph.D. because I wanted to give myself the opportunity to work beyond clinical practice. My background as a registered dietitian provided a strong foundation in clinical nutrition, but I realized that to make a broader impact beyond individual patient care-I needed to

contribute to research that could inform evidencebased guidelines and population-level strategies. My Ph.D. in Applied Clinical Research is equipping me with the biostatistical and methodological skills necessary to design and conduct translational research studies that bridge nutrition science and clinical outcomes.

Research as a dietitian is both challenging and rewarding. Over the past year and a half, I've learned more than I ever expected—far beyond the scope of nutrition. I've gained knowledge in biostatistics, research design, physiology, and epidemiology-areas I wouldn't have had the chance to explore if I had stayed solely in clinical practice. One of the most exciting moments is analyzing results and realizing you've uncovered something meaningful that could change how we approach nutrition and health. It's also incredibly fun to collaborate with professionals from different biostatisticians, fields-physicians, and physiologists-because everyone brings a unique perspective, and sometimes the best ideas come from the most unexpected conversations.

What are your personal and professional goals?

Personally, I strive to maintain a healthy work-life balance, get enough sleep, and remain curious and open-minded. Professionally, my goal is to complete my Ph.D. and establish a career that allows me to integrate research, teaching, and clinical practice. I am passionate about advancing evidence-based dietary interventions and I hope to contribute meaningful research that improves patient outcomes.

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

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Time management was one of the biggest challenges, especially while joining a combined program with a master's degree and dietetic internship. Luckily, during our program orientation, our advisors emphasized the importance of prioritization - do the most important and emergent things first. And more importantly, if a thing is important but not emergent, also prioritize that! Don't wait until it becomes emergent and important at the same time! This proactive approach significantly reduced stress and helped me maintain a sustainable workload. Without it, I would have felt like I was constantly on the edge of burnout culture. While nutrition knowledge is crucial, I've learned that it's equally important to consider the cultural backgrounds of individuals when providing nutrition guidance. As an educator, I encourage my students to integrate evidencebased nutrition with an understanding of their patients' unique practices and beliefs. By fostering this cultural humility, I aim to prepare future dietitians provide more inclusive, to compassionate care that resonates with all individuals.

What advice would you give to fellow dietetics students and those in their internship?

At the beginning of your journey, you may feel overwhelmed and question whether you can achieve your goals. Trust the process-you will get through it! Break large goals into smaller, manageable objectives. Celebrate small accomplishments, as they add up to significant progress. Keep all your notes and lecture slides, as they will remain valuable resources during your internship and even in your professional career. Most importantly, remember that learning is a lifelong journey. Stay open-minded, be willing to adapt, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Some of the most valuable lessons come from learning what doesn't work.

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. 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!

Turning the Health Equity Lens to Diversity in Asian American Profiles

Doan LN, Chau MM, Ahmed N, et al. Turnin the Health Equity Lens to Diversity in Asian American Profiles. Annual Reviews. December 22, 2023. Accessed February 19, 2025.

Asian American (AsAm) populations are characterized in the United States as a homogenous community favoring positive health outcomes compared to other minority groups from a health lens. AsAm populations are assumed to not be impacted by health disparities and social and economic inequities. This mischaracterization of AsAms make them an invisible and marginalized community within healthcare and society and were a population subject to increased racism and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the article the researchers peer reviewed relevant publications to present AsAm health profiles from this nuanced point of view, focusing on general descriptive knowledge, factors affecting healthcare uptake, and effective interventions.

The researchers found three topical domains of research including: cancer, cardiometabolic disease, and mental health. literature After reviewing the and past research, recommendations for future AsAm research and practice include: improve data collection and disaggregation for AsaAms with appropriate comparison groups, develop appropriate and validated measurements for AsAms and AsAM ethnic groups, and acknowledge the role of discrimination and internalized racism on mental health and healthcare utilization along the cancer continuum to name a few. The researchers call on addressing the requirement of powder structures and bisases that have inhibited advancement of AsAm health research and advocacy. Suggested future research requires adoption of community-engaged research infrastructures and processes to increase representation.



Empirical Redundancy? What is the Distinct Role of Internatlized Weight Stigma, Thin-Ideal Internalization, and Self-Objectification on Eating Pathology?

Martin-Wagar CA, Attaway SE, King L, Kronenberger OR, Melcher KA, Empirical Redundancy? What is the Distinct Role of Internalized Weight Stigma, Thin-Ideal Internalization, and Self-Objectification on Eating Pathology?, JAND (2025), doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2025.02.007

Sociocultural risk factors have long been studied as predictors of disordered eating and body dissatisfaction. The researchers in this study looked at three internalized variables: self-objectification, thin-ideal internalization, and internalized weight stigma to see their relation to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating to determine if there are unique relationships between these variables, or if construct redundancy is present. Self-objectification happens when the individual views themselves and their appearance following objectification from another person. Thin-ideal internalization is how an individual internalizes society's ideal of thinness and attraction to try and meet these ideals. Internalized weight stigma is the internalization of negative weight-related stereotypes and attributes.

RESEARCH UPDATES:



(cont.) The researchers conducted a survey with 599 undergraduate college students in the Northwestern United States. Participants completed a survey to self-report measures to report on the three internalized variables. Questions such as "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good" allowed researchers to determine participants place on the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale. Participants were graded on thin-idealization using the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionaire 4, designed to assess societal appearance ideals and pressures. Finally, they used the Modified Weight Bias Internalization Scale to answer questions like "Because of my weight, I feel that I am just as competent as anyone," to determine internalized weight stigma.

From this study, results provided evidence that each of the internalized variables contributed uniquely to body image-related outcome variables. The researchers encouraged dietitians to pay special attention to internalized weight stigma in their patients. Future research shall explore internalized weight stigma in prevention and intervention efforts for disordered eating.





Interested in writing for the newsletter?

Writing for the newsletter is a great way to build on your writing skills, not to mention sharing your voice with the AAPI MIG community. You can contribute many types of work, including:

- · Article about a part of your country or culture
- Asian-style recipes
- Recent research in nutrition or dietetics
- A current issue in nutrition or dietetics

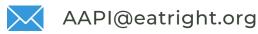
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