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CFDR Announces Research Team for Nutrition Research in Focus Program



The Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research (CFDR) is pleased to announce the successful research team in the inaugural “Nutrition Research in Focus” program. The program features a large-scale research project (\$50,000) focused on a specific nutrition issue. This first year’s focus is functional foods.

The researchers who received the award are Alison Duncan PhD, RD and Judy Sheeshka PhD, RD, both from the University of Guelph. Their project is “**Exploration of the consumption, awareness, understanding and motivating factors related to functional foods in older adults.**”

Functional foods exemplify consumers’ motivation to improve their health through food. This motivation stems from an increase in self healthcare, a modernized food regulatory environment and research that links functional foods to health. For dietitians to effectively interact with their patients about foods and nutrition, they must be informed about consumer reaction to functional foods. The researchers note that among consumers, the older adult segment is the most rapidly growing and arguably can benefit the most from functional foods due to age-related issues that are linked to food and health.

The purpose of the research is to generate information regarding the consumption of functional foods among older adults. Specifically, the researchers will collect information about consumption and purchase patterns, promoters and barriers to consumption, information sources, areas where more information is needed, perceived risks, and awareness of functional foods in relation to health. In addition, future functional food development areas will be identified through exploring preferred targets for food matrices, bioactive constituents and health areas. Lifestyle, medical and demographic data will be collected to characterize participants and further examine functional food consumption patterns.

This research will equip dietitians with information to navigate their interactions with older adults in order to maximize the potential for functional foods to improve nutrition and health. This will allow dietetic practice to keep pace with the expanding functional food industry and the related need for consumer nutritional guidance.

CFDR is pleased to support Drs. Duncan and Sheeshka for their project in this emerging nutrition area. “I’m pleased that CFDR can contribute new knowledge in the area of consumer behavior and functional foods. People nourish their bodies through food and understanding their interest, motivation, and consumption patterns of foods with functional components will better prepare dietitians to respond to consumers needs in this area” says Mary Sue Waisman, President of CFDR. The project is due to be completed in 2012.

CFDR, a charitable foundation created by Dietitians of Canada, has been funding nutrition research projects that support evidence-based dietetic practice for more than 17 years. The evidence resulting from this research allows Dietitians and other health professionals to provide science-based guidance and intervention in the prevention of chronic disease and pursuit of optimal health.

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