

# The Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

## Newsflash

Spring 2019 Issue

The PRC has prepared this electronic **Newsflash** to keep you informed about our work and invite you to take part in our research, education and outreach activities. If you have ideas for working together on shared projects, please let us know.

### For more information about the Yale-Griffin PRC:

Please visit our website at <http://www.yalegriffinprc.org>

## PRC Updates

**Notice of PRC 5-Year Funding Award** - We're thrilled to share the news of continued funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for our next 5-year funding cycle (9/30/19 through 9/29/24). Our community partners, including our Community Committee members, have played a vital role in our success, and we thank you all for your continued support over the years.

Our PRC will be one of 25 institutions within the national PRC network that will receive CDC funding to conduct applied public health research. We plan to continue our focus on chronic disease prevention, while expanding the emphasis to include prevention research in the digital age. Our 5-year public health research project (*Improving Health in Low Income Communities: Virtual Delivery of a Diabetes Prevention Program Facilitated with Community Care Coordination*) will assess the feasibility and health impacts of offering a virtually-delivered Diabetes Prevention Program facilitated by community health workers and hospital-based community nurses to low-income adults at risk for type 2 diabetes. This project will take place in New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley (Ansonia and Derby), and will address barriers that keep people with low incomes from successfully participating in evidence-based lifestyle interventions. Ultimately, we expect to develop a process for translating this model for use in other socio-economically vulnerable communities. We're pleased to welcome Dr. Rafael Perez-Escamilla to the PRC team as Principal Investigator directing the project activities in New Haven.

**Congratulations to PRC Director Dr. David Katz** - The James Beard Foundation recently announced the nominees for the 2019 James Beard Awards in nearly 60 categories. This year's nominees in the Health and Wellness category include food writer and Columbia University faculty member Mark Bittman, and PRC Director David L. Katz, MD, MPH, who co-authored two articles ("The Last Conversation You'll Ever Need to Have About Eating Right" and "The Last Conversation You'll Need to Have on Eating Right: The Follow-ups") published in *New York Magazine / Grub Street*. The Awards further the Foundation's mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. The winners in each category will be announced later this spring.

### **Welcome to Our Interns**

- **Kerstin Eckner** is in her final semester of undergraduate studies at Southern CT State University, with a major in Public Health and a minor in Nutrition. Kerstin is developing content for the Valley Health Challenge campaign, assisting with quantitative data management and qualitative data analysis for the VITAHLS initiative, and working on survey development for the ACCESS project.

- **Peter Zapata** has an undergraduate degree in nutrition from the University of Connecticut and is currently an MPH student at Southern CT State University. The PRC and Griffin Hospital recently joined forces with the Valley Council's Food Security Task Force efforts to address food insecurity and health promotion in the Valley's food pantries. Peter has focused on background research to identify best and promising practices, and will assist the pantries as they conduct self-assessments in April.

## Current Projects

### Valley Council of Health & Human Services Food Security Task Force

This Task Force was created in 2014 as an outcome of the *Valley Hunger Study: A Report on Issues of Hunger and Access to Food in Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton*. In January, the PRC and Griffin's Department of Community Health teamed up with the Task Force to help address food insecurity and health promotion efforts in the Valley's food pantries. During the month of April, the PRC will assist the Seymour Oxford Food Bank, ACT Spooner House, Christ Episcopal Church Kathleen Samela Memorial Food Bank, The Salvation Army Food Bank, and St. Vincent DePaul's Food Pantry in conducting healthy food pantry self-assessments. The findings from the self-assessments will help to identify assets and opportunities for improvement, and will be used to inform the next phase of work for the Task Force – implementing best and promising practices to address food insecurity and health promotion.

## Grant Proposals and Awards

### RECENTLY-SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

- **Identifying and Overcoming the Impediments to Breastfeeding for Mothers with Diabetes**  
In January, Kim Doughty, MPH, PhD of the PRC submitted a grant proposal to the Allen Foundation, in partnership with Sarah Taylor, MD, a neonatologist and associate professor of Pediatrics at the Yale School of Medicine, for a study to benefit women with gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM, which occurs during pregnancy) and their infants. Prior research suggests that breastfeeding offers several potential benefits to women with a history of GDM. These include: more stable blood glucose levels during pregnancy; improved insulin sensitivity during and after pregnancy; reduced risk of type 2 diabetes for several years after delivery; and slower early weight gain among their offspring. Despite established benefits of breastfeeding, there is evidence that women with GDM are less likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding due to having less favorable attitudes toward breastfeeding, less perceived support for breastfeeding, and less comfort with breastfeeding in front of others. The proposed project aims to: (1) identify factors that contribute to reduced breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity among women with GDM; (2) develop a screening tool to help clinicians identify women with GDM who need additional breastfeeding support; and (3) ultimately develop interventions designed to address identified barriers.
- **Flaxseed Consumption in Adults with Metabolic Syndrome: Effects on Body Composition, Diet Quality, and Cardio-metabolic Risk Factors in Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes**  
In February, we submitted a letter of intent to AmeriFlax to assess the effects of daily consumption of flaxseeds in adults with metabolic syndrome, a condition that can increase the risk for Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular events. Flaxseeds are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, and are relatively high in mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids. The proposed randomized controlled study was intended to compare the effects of including 60 grams of flaxseeds daily for 6 weeks in the otherwise habitual diets of 30 adults with metabolic syndrome, vs. 6 weeks of their regular habitual diets, on their body composition, serum lipids, C-reactive protein, insulin sensitivity, and overall diet quality. Unfortunately, we were not invited to submit a full proposal for this study.

- **[The Impact of Consumption of Eggs in the Context of Plant-Based Diets on Diet Quality and Cardio-Metabolic Risk Factors in Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes](#)**

In March, we submitted a letter of intent to the Egg Nutrition Center for a randomized controlled study with 28 adults at risk for type 2 diabetes. The proposed study will compare the impact of including 2 eggs daily for 6 weeks in a plant-based diet, vs. excluding eggs from a plant-based diet, on the diet quality, nutrient intake, and cardio-metabolic risk of study participants. Plant-based diets are recommended to reduce type 2 diabetes risk, as long as intake of protein and other nutrients such as Vitamin B12, iron, zinc, copper and selenium is adequate. Eggs are rich in high-quality protein, vitamins, and minerals, and are satiating, with the potential to regulate calorie intake and reduce body weight. Including eggs in primarily plant-based diets could potentially lead to improved diet quality.

- **[Relationships between Egg Intake in Infancy and Allergy, Growth, and Cognitive Disorders in Childhood](#)**

In March, we submitted a letter of intent to the Egg Nutrition Center for a secondary analysis of data collected by other researchers from 2000 mother/child pairs across the U.S. from late pregnancy through the child's age of 12 months, and through the child's age of 6 years for a large subset of this group. The proposed study will investigate associations between egg consumption in infancy and growth, egg allergy, and other food allergy at age 12 months and 6 years; and measures of cognitive disorder or impairment at 6 years. Benefits of egg intake for adults include increased satiety and neutral-to-protective effects on cardio-metabolic health. Less is known about the role of eggs in the diets of infants and young children. Egg consumption at ages 6-24 months has been associated with increased intake of choline, lutein and zeaxanthin, alpha-linolenic acid, vitamin B12, phosphorus, and selenium; and lower intake of added sugar. Many of these nutrients have implications for cognitive development. To our knowledge, no studies have examined prospective associations between egg consumption in early life and disorders of cognitive development.

## Presentations

David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, PRC Director, delivered the following presentations:

- Presentation on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the 8th Edition of the International Government Communication Forum held in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.
- [The Truth about Food](#) on March 29<sup>th</sup> at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY.

## Publications

- **Katz DL, Karlsen MC.** [The Need for a Whole Systems Approach to Evidence Evaluation: An Update from the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.](#) J Altern Complement Med. 2019 Mar;25(S1):S19-S20.
- Adams ML, Grandpre J, **Katz DL**, Shenson D. [The Impact of Key Modifiable Risk Factors on Leading Chronic Conditions.](#) Prev Med. 2019 Mar;120:113-118.
- Perlman A, Fogerite SG, Glass O, Bechard E, Ali A, **Njike VY**, Pieper C, Dmitrieva NO, Luciano A, Rosenberger L, Keever T, Milak C, Finkelstein EA, Mahon G, Campanile G, Cotter A, **Katz DL.** [Efficacy and Safety of Massage for Osteoarthritis of the Knee: a Randomized Clinical Trial.](#) J Gen Intern Med. 2019 Mar;34(3):379-386.
- Prescott SL, Logan AC, **Katz DL.** [Preventive Medicine for Person, Place, and Planet: Revisiting the Concept of High-Level Wellness in the Planetary Health Paradigm.](#) Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2019 Jan 16;16(2).

- Logan AC, Goldenberg JZ, Guiltinan J, Seely D, **Katz DL**. North American Naturopathic Medicine in the 21st Century: Time for a Seventh Guiding Principle - Scientia Critica. Explore (NY). 2018 Sep;14(5):367-372.

## *In-Service / Training Opportunities*

You are invited to join us at our **Journal Club meetings or other professional development sessions**, usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects. Occasionally, we devote these sessions to reviewing recent findings from our own studies.

**Our next meeting will be held at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital.**

- **Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Centeio EE, McCaughtry N, Moore EWG, et al. Building Healthy Communities: A Comprehensive School Health Program to prevent obesity in elementary schools. Prev Med. 2018 Jun;111:210-215.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at [valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org), or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

## *Let's Stay in Touch*

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director ([beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org)) or any of the staff listed in this **Newsflash**.

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The Yale-Griffin PRC is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program.



***Healthier Communities Together***

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