

Elie A. Akl, MD, MPH, PhD

Elie Akl is a tenured Professor of Medicine at the American university of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. He serves as the Associate Dean for Clinical Research at the Faculty of Medicine, leads the division of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics (GIMG) at AUBMC, directs the AUB GRADE Center, and co-directs the Center for systematic reviews of health policy and systems research (SPARK). He has a part time appointment in the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact (HE&I) at McMaster University. His research expertise is in systematic reviews, practice guidelines, and conflicts of interest. He serves as a guideline methodologist for a number of North American professional organizations and the World Health Organization. He published more than 500 peer-reviewed papers and has been listed as a one of “Highly Cited Researchers” yearly since 2015.

Karima Benkhedda, PhD

Dr. Karima Benkhedda is the Head of the Nutrition Quality and Safety Section in the Bureau of Nutritional Sciences, Food Directorate at Health Canada. Since she joined Health Canada in 2005, Dr. Benkhedda worked in several areas including nutrition research, nutrition premarket assessment of supplemented foods, novel foods, food additives, fibres and health claim substantiation. She has been extensively involved in policy and regulatory work related to supplemented foods and health claims and developing guidance on scientific requirements for health claim substantiation. Dr. Benkhedda conducted and used systematic reviews and meta-analyses in the context of food health claim review and approval, and for developing guidance, policy, and regulations. She is a core member of the NUQUEST Working Group that developed risk of bias assessment tools for nutrition studies. Dr. Benkhedda has also contributed to international nutrition policy including the Dietary Reference Intakes Nomination Process and the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the development of international food standards. She received the 2022 Assistant Deputy Minister’s Award for Excellence in Science, and the 2015 Assistant Deputy Minister’s Award for Transparency and Openness.

Vasanti Malik, ScD

Vasanti Malik, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences, Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She holds a Canada Research Chair in Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention. Dr. Malik’s research uses a combination of epidemiological studies, clinical trials and evidence synthesis to evaluate dietary and lifestyle determinants of obesity and cardiometabolic diseases in different populations and across the lifecourse. Dr. Malik’s research also includes studying the intersection of diet, health and environmental sustainability with the goal of informing dietary guidance and public policies to prevent chronic diseases and promote more sustainable food systems.

Barbara O. Schneeman, PhD

Barbara O. Schneeman, Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Nutrition at the University of California, Davis. From 2004 to 2013 she was the Director of the Office of Nutrition, Labeling, and Dietary Supplements at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She chaired the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and served on the 1990 and 1995 Committees. She is a member of 2 nutrition advisory committees for WHO and a member of the NASEM Food and Nutrition Board. Over her career she has received several awards and has been recognized for her work on dietary fiber, gastro-intestinal function, development and use of food-based dietary guidelines, and policy development in food and nutrition. She is a Fellow of ASN and AAAS.