Standing Committee on Evidence Synthesis and Communication in Diet and Chronic Disease Relationships

Exploring the Types of Evidence Behind Diet and Chronic Disease: A Webinar

Speaker Bios

Robert M. Califf, MD, MACC, was the Commissioner of Food and Drugs from February 2016 to January 2017 and from February 2022 to January 2025. He is currently Instructor in Medicine at Duke University School of Medicine. Between his 2 stints at FDA, Dr. Califf was the head of medical policy and strategy for Alphabet's subsidiaries Verily and Google Health. Previously, Dr. Califf served as the FDA's Deputy Commissioner for Medical Products and Tobacco from February 2015 until his appointment as Commissioner in February 2016. Prior to joining the FDA, Dr. Califf was a professor of medicine and vice chancellor for clinical and translational research at Duke University. He also served as director of the Duke Translational Medicine Institute and founding director of the Duke Clinical Research Institute. A nationally and internationally recognized expert in cardiovascular medicine, health outcomes research, healthcare quality, and clinical research, Dr. Califf has led many landmark clinical trials and is one of the most frequently cited authors in biomedical science, with more than 1,200 publications in peer-reviewed literature. Dr. Califf became a Member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine (IOM)) in 2016, one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine. Dr. Califf has served on numerous IOM committees, and he has served as a member of the FDA Cardiorenal Advisory Panel and FDA Science Board's Subcommittee on Science and Technology. Dr. Califf has also served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Library of Medicine, as well as on advisory committees for the National Cancer Institute, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Council of the National Institute on Aging. While at Duke, Dr. Califf led major initiatives aimed at improving methods and infrastructure for clinical research, including the Clinical Trials Transformation Initiative (CTTI), a public-private partnership co-founded by the FDA and Duke. He also served as the principal investigator for Duke's Clinical and Translational Science Award and the NIH Health Care Systems Research Collaboratory coordinating center. Dr. Califf is a graduate of Duke University School of Medicine. He completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of California, San Francisco and a fellowship in cardiology at Duke.

Gary A. Churchill, Ph.D., received his SB degree in Mathematics from MIT in 1983 and Ph.D. in Biostatistics in 1988 from the University of Washington, Seattle. He is currently Professor and the Karl Gunnar Johannsen Chair in Computational Biology

at the Jackson Laboratory. Dr. Churchill's research addresses the genetics of health and disease using the mouse as a model system. He has played a central role in the establishment of genetics resources including the Collaborative Cross and Diversity Outbred mouse populations. He was chosen as a 2019 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for his contributions to the field of systems genetics to study aging and metabolic disease. Dr. Churchill is co-director of the Jackson Aging Center, a Nathan Shock Center of Excellence in the Basic Biology of Aging.

Jessica M. Franklin, Ph.D., joined Optum in 2020 after 10 years as faculty in the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Dr. Franklin has extensive experience in designing and leading studies of the effectiveness, safety, and utilization of medications from large healthcare databases, including health insurance claims and electronic health records. She led the development and application of a wide range of novel methods in pharmacoepidemiology, such as automated variable selection and model building methods for propensity score adjustment, measures for evaluating covariate balance, and methods for classifying and predicting medication adherence. She also co-founded the FDA and NIH-funded RCT DUPLICATE project focused on producing an empirical evidence base for the validity of real-world evidence on medications. She has authored or co-authored more than 150 articles in peer-reviewed medical, epidemiology, and biostatistics journals. Dr. Franklin is a fellow of the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology, where she is currently serving on the board of directors. Dr. Franklin received a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from University of Georgia and a PhD in biostatistics from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Marta Guasch-Ferré, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Group leader at the Department of Public Health and Novo Nordisk Center for Basic Metabolic Research at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She also holds an appointment as an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, U.S. Dr. Guasch-Ferré leads a research group mainly focused on integrating nutrition and lifestyle factors with –omics data, such as metabolomics and proteomics, to advance the prevention of cardiometabolic diseases. She has authored numerous publications in leading scientific journals, contributing significantly to the field of nutritional and cardiovascular epidemiology. She recently published a seminal paper titled 'Optimal Diets for Healthy Aging' in Nature Medicine, serving as the senior author. She is the PI of recently funded randomized controlled trial in Denmark, the PLANETDIET trial: Sustainable diets and cardiometabolic health: a multiomics approach in an RCT.

John P.A. Ioannidis, MD, DSc, is Professor of Medicine, Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health, and Professor (by courtesy) of Biomedical Data Science at the School of Medicine, and co-Director of the Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford (METRICS) at Stanford University. He is the recipient of many awards, and he has been inducted in the Association of American Physicians (where he served as President in 2023-2024), the European Academy of Cancer Sciences, the American Epidemiological Society, the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, the US National Academy of Medicine, and as a corresponding member in the Academy of Sciences in Bologna. He has received honorary titles from FORTH and U Ioannina, honorary doctorates from the universities of Rotterdam, Athens, Tilburg, Edinburgh, Thessaloniki and McMaster and multiple honorary lectureships. He is among the 10 scientists with the highest current citation rate in the world (6,000 new citations per month per Google Scholar) with 640,000 total citations to his work.

Daniel J. Raiten, Ph.D., DFASN, has a BA in history and political science, BS/MS in animal science/agriculture and a PhD in Human Nutrition from Penn State University, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Yale Child Study Center. Dr. Raiten has spent the majority of his career at the interface between research and translation to support evidence informed practice, programs and policies in food safety and nutrition. He began his career at NIH in 1999in the NICHD Office of Global Health, and served as the Program Director for Nutrition at NICHD/NIH where he was responsible for the portfolio of grants and related activities to support and advance the MCH nutrition agenda in the US and globally. He joined the NIH Office of Nutrition Research in October 2023 where he serves as the Senior Nutrition Scientist. He is a recipient of the DHHS Secretary's Award, 6 NIH Director's Awards, and was elected as a Fellow of the American Society for Nutrition in 2020.

James Wells, Ph.D., received his Ph.D. degree in Genetics from the State University of NY at Stony Brook and performed his postdoctoral research at Harvard University. He became an Assistant professor at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in the Division of Developmental Biology in 2002, was promoted to associate professor in 2008 and full professor in 2012. Dr. Wells is a Cincinnati Children's Hospital Research Foundation endowed professor in the Division of Developmental Biology and is the Director for Basic Research in the Division of Endocrinology. He is a co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer of the Center for Stem Cell and Organoid Medicine. Dr. Wells' research focuses on the processes by which gastrointestinal and endocrine organs form in the developing embryo and how they maintain systemic metabolic homeostasis. His work in developmental biology has provided the basis for the efforts to generate human cells and tissues from pluripotent stem cells. His lab has pioneered approaches to generate gastrointestinal (GI) tissue organoids of the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, intestine, and colon from human pluripotent stem cells. His lab uses human

organoids and mouse models to study congenital defects of the digestive tract, as well as digestive and metabolic diseases like inflammatory bowel disease and diabetes. In addition, Dr. Wells and his colleagues are using organoids as a basis for tissue engineering efforts to generate functional tissues for transplantation.