



American Society for Nutrition  
*Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice*  
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## **ASN IDENTIFIES NUTRITION RESEARCH AREAS WITH GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALTH IMPACT**

**August 1, 2013**—The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) has identified six urgent Nutrition Research Needs whose advancement is projected to have the greatest impact on the future health and well-being of global populations. “In this age of dwindling resources and competing priorities, findings from ASN’s Nutrition Research Needs will provide an opportunity to positively impact global health and economies,” said ASN President Gordon Jensen, MD, PhD. Strong investment and multidisciplinary collaboration are necessary to support the innovative research that is required. The following Nutrition Research Needs will provide the basis for solutions to many health-related issues, allowing individuals to lead healthier, more productive lives.

- **Variability in Individual Responses to Diet and Food** – Research will explain how different factors in an individuals’ make-up (genetics, gut microbial populations, etc.) lead to varying responses to diet and/or specific food components, and play a role in overall health. Such research will pave the way for personalized nutrition (detailed dietary recommendations) and predicting an individuals’ future health status.
- **The Impact of Nutrition on Healthy Growth, Development and Reproduction** – Research will elucidate how diet and exposure to certain food components during critical periods of development, such as during pregnancy and early life, can alter normal developmental progression and contribute to disease later in life.
- **The Role of Nutrition in Health Maintenance** – Continued research to understand how good nutrition manages weight, promotes health, and prevents disease is paramount to improve the health and well-being of future generations and economies.
- **The Role of Nutrition in Medical Management** – Research to better define the role that nutrition plays in disease initiation and progression will minimize unfavorable impacts of both *reduced and elevated* nutrient intakes on disease, and lead to improved patient responses to therapy and survival rates.
- **Nutrition-Related Behaviors** – Research can clarify the role of cognitive function in food choice and nutrition-related behaviors, leading to effective food policy to help combat obesity and other chronic diseases of public health importance.

- **Food Supply / Environment** – Research is needed to show how the food environment (where foods are sold and their proximity, what foods are available, food prices, etc.) influences food choice and diet quality, and how the food environment can be best altered to improve diet and lifestyle.

In addition to the research agenda, ASN identified five cross-cutting research tools that are critical to the advancement of nutrition research: Omics; Bioinformatics; Databases; Biomarkers; and, Cost Effectiveness Analysis. Find out more about the Nutrition Research Needs and the tools necessary to advance them by reading “Nutrition research to affect food and a healthy life span<sup>1</sup>” in the August issue of all ASN journals or by visiting [www.nutrition.org/researchagenda](http://www.nutrition.org/researchagenda). Co-author David Klurfeld, PhD, provides a focused discussion of the research needs and tools [in this video](#), stating that everyone in the field of nutrition should read these. To schedule an interview with any of the working group members, including Chair Robert Russell, MD, please email [media@nutrition.org](mailto:media@nutrition.org).

1 Sarah D. Ohlhorst, Robert Russell, Dennis Bier, David M. Klurfeld, Zhaoping Li, Jonathan R. Mein, John Milner, A. Catharine Ross, Patrick Stover, and Emily Konopka. Nutrition research to affect food and a healthy life span. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2013 98:620-625.

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