

Future Health: Can nutrition and lifestyle combine to make a global impact?

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Professor Carol Wagstaff, Research Dean for Agriculture, Food and Health, University of Reading



Carol received her DPhil from the University of York in 1999 and is also an alumnus of Royal Holloway, University of London. She was appointed as Assistant Professor at University of Reading in January 2007 and promoted to Professor in 2017. Carol is presently Professor of Crop Quality for Health in the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences at the University of Reading and Research Dean for Agriculture Food and Health. She also leads FoodSEqual, part of a £24 million investment by government to transform the UK food system.

Carol leads a research group that takes a food-system wide approach to improving the quality of fresh produce and ensuring that everyone has access to it. Quality includes the nutritional value, appearance, flavour and shelf life, and the group enables better quality fresh produce to be offered to consumers through quantifying and manipulating the impact that the growing environment, postharvest handling and supply chain management has on crop quality parameters.

Professor Ian Givens, Director, Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, University of Reading



Professor Ian Givens has undergraduate and doctoral training in Biochemistry and Nutrition and is a Chartered Biologist and a UK Registered Nutritionist. He is currently Professor of Food Chain Nutrition and Director of the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health at the University of Reading. His research has a primary focus on the consequences of consuming animal-derived foods, including their contribution to nutrient supply and their association with chronic disease risk across the key life stages.

A current concern is the sub-optimal intake of bonetrophic nutrients by teenage females which is likely to increase the risk of reduced bone strength in later life, especially in the post-menopausal period. Ongoing research related to dairy foods includes the effect of modifying the fatty acid composition of milk fat and its effect of markers of cardiovascular diseases and the effect of milk proteins on blood pressure and glycaemic control.

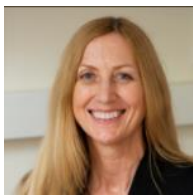
Dr Javier Fontecha, Head, Food Lipid Biomarkers and Health, Institute of Food Science Research (CIAL,CSIC) Autónoma University of Madrid



Javier Fontecha, PhD in Biochemistry, is a permanent Scientific Researcher at the Institute of Food Science Research (CIAL, CSIC) at the Autonomous University of Madrid. He is currently the head of the Food Lipid Biomarkers and Health Group. His research focuses on understanding the role of food lipids, especially those with high biological activity such as Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA), Omega-3 fatty acids, and phospho- and sphingolipids (from MFGM), in relation to the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, obesity, improvement of cognitive development of infants, and age-related mild cognitive impairment.

In recent years, his group has introduced the concept of “biomarker of health”. Over the last decade, they have initiated pioneering research on MFGM, optimizing protocols to improve the isolation of MFGM-enriched fractions, investigating key components such as characteristic polar lipids and other highly bioactive molecules such as cerebrosides and gangliosides, and developing high-resolution chromatographic procedures for the quantification and identification of these components. Additionally, he is carrying out in vitro and in vivo dietary interventions in close collaboration with other groups and hospitals. The research impact of his group has attracted attention, and several projects and R&D+i contracts are being developed.

Professor Julie Lovegrove, Director Hugh Sinclair Unit, University of Reading



Professor Julie Lovegrove is the Director of the Hugh Sinclair Unit of Human Nutrition and the Deputy Director of the Institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research at the University of Reading. Professor Lovegrove’s research focus is the nutritional influences of cardiovascular disease risk, including nutrient-gene interactions and personalised nutrition.

Of particular interest are the effects of dietary fats and plant phytochemicals on vascular health insulin sensitivity and lipid metabolism. She also serves on a number of external committees including the UK Government’s Scientific Advisory Committee for Nutrition (SACN), SACN’s sub-committee on “Saturated Fats and Health”, she is Deputy Chair of Council for the Association for Nutrition (AfN) and President of the Nutrition Society of UK and Ireland.

Professor Claire Williams, Chair of Neuroscience, School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading



Professor Williams is Chair of Neuroscience in the School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences at the University of Reading, UK. She received her PhD in Psychology from the University of Reading in 2000. Her research group, the Nutritional Psychology laboratory, investigates the health benefits of plant-derived chemicals. The main focus of her laboratory is the interplay between dietary intake and measures of psychological well-being such as cognitive performance, food preference, mood, and quality of life using a wide range of techniques (e.g. animal studies, randomised controlled trials, neuroimaging) and population groups (e.g., school-aged children, healthy adults, older adults, patients with mild cognitive impairment).

The group have published a number of articles including a demonstration that improvements in spatial working memory induced by a high flavonoid diet can be linked to de novo protein synthesis in rat hippocampus, flavonoid supplementation is associated with increased cerebral blood perfusion in healthy older adults, and that single acute doses of blueberries can significantly improve memory and attention in children aged 8-10 years old. She has published more than ninety peer-reviewed research articles, five book chapters and is listed as an inventor on six international patent families, including 34 worldwide granted patents.

Professor John Mathers, Professor of Human Nutrition, Human Nutrition & Exercise Research Centre, Newcastle University



John Mathers is Professor of Human Nutrition in Newcastle University where he set up the BSc in Food and Human Nutrition degree programme and directed the Human Nutrition Research Centre. His major research interests are in understanding how eating patterns influence risk of age-related diseases including diabetes, dementia and cancer. This includes studies of the underlying mechanisms and investigation of lifestyle-based interventions to reduce disease risk and to enhance healthy ageing.

He has had a long-term interest in the effects of dietary fibre on function and health. Among his external roles, John was President of the Nutrition Society and serves/ served on grants panels and/or research strategy boards for the MRC, BBSRC, ESRC, WCRF and others. He is Chair of the Board of Trustees of the British Nutrition Foundation, a Trustee of the Rank Prize Funds and he chairs the Scientific Advisory Board of the Joint Programming Initiative, a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life. Since 2019, John has been Editor-in-Chief of the British Journal of Nutrition.

Prof. Henny Osbahr, Co-Head, Department of International Development, School of Agriculture, Policy and Development, University of Reading



Henny is an interdisciplinary geographer with over 25 years experience in the dynamics of food security, agricultural innovation and rural communication services to support sustainable rural livelihood transitions across the Global South. She has a particular interest in the role of knowledge systems in shaping decision-making, agency and the governance of agrifood systems. She has an extensive research and consultancy background in climate change adaptation and natural resource management in Africa and Asia, and is currently a visiting Professor at the University of Hokkaido, Japan, and the University of the Philippines, Los Banos. Henny is the Research Development Lead for the Global Development Research Division at the University of Reading. She has three current research projects, that build on her international interdisciplinary partnerships.

The first is a large GCRF-NERC funded initiative that includes understanding decision-making about the livelihood, policy and microplastic trade-offs in the use of agricultural plastic mulch in China, India, Sri Lanka, Egypt and Vietnam. The second is as the social science lead of a programme in India started in 2015 and funded by KfW, exploring policy communication and gendered narratives of agricultural innovation resulting from the natural farming. This includes assessing gender and dietary diversity. She also uses participatory visual methods, such as photovoice, and explores the integration of social science approaches within interdisciplinary research to support resilience in agrifood systems. The third initiative focuses on ethnic minority food culture, dietary diversity and farm decision making, with new work in the highlands of northern Vietnam.

Dr Claudia Murray, Research Fellow, Department of Real Estate and Planning, Henley Business School, University of Reading



Claudia is a Research Fellow at the Department of Real Estate and Planning, Henley Business School, University of Reading. Her research interests focus on urban and rural development in Latin America and the Caribbean, taking into consideration the region's unique cultural and political milieu. Combining historical and contemporaneous knowledge of Latin America, Claudia's work contributes to wider discussions on urban and peri-urban transformations in the Global South. Her main interest focuses on the region's changing socio-political relations with the land and its natural environment. She is particularly

interested in housing and sustainability; land allocation and planning; informality and resilience; inequality and well-being. Externally, Claudia is a Board Member of the World Habitat Awards (WHA) – Since 2016. WHA is an international charity recognised by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. It has a Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, supporting the goals of UN-HABITAT with the works reviewed by the WHA. She is also the lead of the Housing Expert group at Metrex - an EU organization that gathers metropolitan authorities across Europe including the UK.