

Nutritional considerations for healthy aging and reduction in age-related chronic disease

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Improving dietary resilience and better integration of nutrition in the health care system can promote healthy aging and may significantly reduce the financial and societal burden of the "silver tsunami." This is the key finding of a "Nutritional Considerations for Healthy Aging and Reduction in Age-Related Chronic Disease," a new paper initiated under the auspices of the Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science Working Group on Nutrition for Aging Population, and published in *Advances in Nutrition*.

By 2050, the number of persons aged 80 years old and over will reach 392 million, about three times the 2013 population. According to the report, an increasingly large portion of the population will be vulnerable to nutritional frailty, a state commonly seen in older adults, characterized by sudden significant weight-loss and loss of muscle mass and strength, or an essential loss of physiologic reserves, making the person susceptible to disability. Ironically, while increasing numbers of older adults are obese, many are also susceptible to nutritional frailty and, as a result, age-related diseases including sarcopenia, cognitive decline, and infectious disease.

The review concludes that exploring dietary resilience, defined as a conceptual model to describe material, physical, psychological and social factors that influence food purchase, preparation and consumption, is needed to better understand older adults' access to meal quality and mealtime experience. A recent model to frame food intake includes the addition of more randomized clinical trials that include [older adults](#) with

disease and medication. This will help to identify their specific nutrient needs, biomarkers to understand the impact of advancing age on protein requirements, skeletal muscle turnover and a re-evaluation of how BMI guidelines are used.

"A nutritional assessment model that takes into consideration the effect of aging on muscle mass, weight loss and nutrient absorption is crucial to overall wellness in our elderly population," said Gilles Bergeron, Ph.D., executive director, The Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science at the New York Academy of Sciences, New York, NY. "However, [nutrition](#) recommendations are usually based on that of a typical healthy adult, and fail to consider the effect of aging on [muscle mass](#), weight loss, and nutrient absorption and utilization."

Simin Nikbin Meydani, D.V.M., Ph.D., director of the Nutritional Immunology Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University, Boston, MA concurs. "Much greater emphasis needs to be placed on prioritizing research that will fill the knowledge gaps and provide the kind of data needed by health and nutrition experts if we're going to address this problem," she said. "There also needs to be more education about on-going nutritional needs for those involved with elder-care - not only in a clinical setting, but also for family members who are responsible for aging adults."

More information: Julie Shlisky et al, Nutritional Considerations for Healthy Aging and Reduction in Age-Related Chronic Disease, *Advances in Nutrition: An International Review Journal* (2017). [DOI: 10.3945/an.116.013474](https://doi.org/10.3945/an.116.013474)

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