

Dietetic and nutrition researchers in Canada: who are they and what are they researching?

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Introduction: Recently, there has been increased attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion within research in Canada. This focus speaks to issues of both representation and excellence in research by valuing diverse perspectives. Discipline specific explorations are needed.

Objectives: To describe nutrition and dietetic faculty members according to institution type, rank, gender, Registered Dietitian (RD) status, research metrics, primary research methods used, and research topic.

Methods: Researchers were identified from nutrition departments at U15 universities and at accredited dietetic programs. Gender was identified through the mention of gender-specific pronouns (eg. She, him). All data regarding faculty members, their institutions, H-index, number of documents published, number of citations, number of co-authors, and most recent publications were collected through publicly available university websites and Scopus. A researcher's 5 most recent publications were selected, and coded according to methods used and broad nutrition-related topic area. Data were entered into Microsoft Excel and SPSS was used for data analysis.

Results: Faculty members (n=245) from 21 institutions were identified for inclusion, including 75 faculty members who identified as an RD. RD faculty members are less likely to be affiliated with U15 universities ($p < 0.001$), more likely to be affiliated with a PDEP accredited institution ($p = .026$), and more likely identify as a woman ($p < 0.001$). RDs were significantly less likely to hold a senior rank (i.e. full or emeritus professor) ($p=0.046$) compared to non-RD faculty members; however, this relationship was almost entirely attributed to gender ($p=0.006$). Among RD faculty members, more than half of the papers published were quantitative.

Conclusions: RD faculty members are not equitably represented among senior faculty ranks in nutrition-focused departments in Canada and this is attributed to their gender. Quantitative research methods dominate the field, particularly at U15 institutions.

Significance: Discipline-specific issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion are present within nutrition and dietetics.

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