



Canadian Foundation
for Dietetic Research

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



CFDR members at CNS
Anisha Mahajan, Flora Wang and Fiona Wallace at CNS 2025



From the cover...

One of the initiatives of the new 2025-2028 Strategic plan is to establish and activate a partnership with CNS to co-lead knowledge translation and awareness campaigns. CFDR Board members Anisha Mahajan, Flora Wang and Fiona Wallace attended the CNS 2025 meeting in Montreal.

CFDR Board Governance and Operations

The CFDR Board is operating as a governance/operational Board. All Board members sit on working committees. These include communications, finance, fundraising, governance, nominations, research.

The CFDR **communications** committee is embracing a fresh, dynamic approach to communication by expanding its presence across key social media platforms. Through targeted content, real-time updates, and interactive engagement, CFDR aims to connect more meaningfully with dietitians, researchers, practitioners, and the broader nutrition community. These strategies are designed to amplify the impact of dietetic research, foster collaboration, and keep stakeholders informed and inspired. Please follow CFDR on Linked-In, Instagram and Facebook.

The **fundraising** committee continues to work with Dietitians of Canada to develop a fundraising strategy. The fundraising committee has arranged for CFDR engaging Grant Advance, an online platform that focuses exclusively on approaching foundations for support.



CFDR Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028

A strategic plan has been produced for 2025 – 2028. The Board members, with the assistance of Sidekick, worked on developing the new strategic plan in the spring/summer of 2025.

Strategy	Initiatives
Strengthen Board Governance, Capacity and Continuity	<p>Update CFDR's governance policies to reflect current practices and strategic direction</p> <p>Develop and implement a refreshed Board onboarding and team-building manual</p> <p>Design and deliver Board training focused on governance best practices, financial stewardship and team cohesion</p>
Achieve Financial Sustainability and Diversify Revenue	<p>Identify, apply to, and follow up on high-potential funding opportunities via Grant Advance</p> <p>Develop and distribute a CFDR introductory package and letter for applications</p> <p>Engage DC and leverage CFDR Board networks to support donor and sponsor outreach efforts</p> <p>Pilot paid webinars to generate revenue and test pricing model</p>
Improve Awareness and Reputation of CFDR	<p>Design and host an annual online research showcase to highlight CFDR-funded project</p> <p>Develop and execute a year-round social media plan with themed campaigns and weekly posts</p> <p>Establish and activate a partnership with CNS to co-lead knowledge translation and awareness campaigns</p>



Marcia Cooper



Tina Stewart

2024–25 Report of the Interim Co Chairs

Hello -

This has been another exciting and productive year for Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research (CFDR). We are proud to present our 2024-2025 Annual Report, showcasing the meaningful progress made toward advancing evidence-based nutrition and dietetic research across Canada.

CFDR remains steadfast in its mission to advance knowledge that supports optimal health through food and nutrition. In recent years, we have focused on strengthening our financial stability and organizational resilience. This year marked an important milestone as the CFDR Board of Directors developed a new Strategic Plan (2025–2028); a roadmap to guide our continued growth, collaboration, and impact.

Our partnership with Dietitians of Canada, supported by our Memorandum of Understanding, continues to be instrumental in achieving our shared goals. We are deeply grateful for the thoughtful leadership and commitment of the CFDR Board, and for the dedicated work of the Scientific Review Committee, chaired by Dr. Alison Duncan. A special thank you to all committee members and reviewers for their time and expertise.

In 2024–2025, CFDR proudly funded five innovative research projects and supported professional development through initiatives such as our upcoming webinar series (Fall 2025) and Virtual Research Showcase (March 2026). These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to nurturing Canadian research excellence and amplifying its impact within the nutrition and dietetics community.

Within this report, you'll find highlights of our funded research, financial performance, and strategic direction. We invite you to explore the ways CFDR continues to make a difference—made possible through the collective dedication of our supporters and partners.

Together, we are shaping the future of food, nutrition, and health.

Marcia Cooper PhD RD FDC
Interim Co-chair

Tina Stewart MHS RD
Interim Co-chair

Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Director

It has been a busy year at CFDR. Several grants have been completed with summaries provided in this report. We are thrilled to have granted funds for five exciting research projects.

CFDR has undertaken two new research initiatives over the past year. We began planning for CFDR research webinars (held in September 2025) featuring researchers who have been funded by CFDR. We also began planning for a virtual Research Showcase that will be held in March 2026 during Nutrition Month. CFDR traditionally held a Research Showcase during the Dietitians of Canada (DC) conference; however, a DC conference has not been held since 2023. We know that dietitian researchers across the country have always looked forward to presenting their research at these events. The 2026 showcase will feature oral presentations from chosen abstracts as well as keynote addresses from two former CFDR-funded researchers. We are excited to present this going forward.

It has been a pleasure to work with the CFDR Board of Directors. They are all very committed to the Board that is now operating on both a governance and operational model. Special thanks to Teri Trigueros from Dietitians of Canada in managing the finances of CFDR.



Janis Randall Simpson
PhD RD FDC FCNS
Executive Director CFDR
Professor Emerita
University of Guelph



Janis Randall Simpson

2024-25 CFDR Research Awards

Since 1993, CFDR has been funding practice-based research projects in Nutrition and Dietetics to contribute to existing knowledge, to enhance dietetic practice, and ultimately, to build a healthier Canada. Research grants are awarded to dietitians across Canada.

CFDR approved funding of ~\$100,000 for the following five projects under its 2024-25 Annual Grants Competition.

2025 Successful Research Teams



**Melissa Fernandez, PhD, RD,
University of Ottawa**

Enhancing dietitians' social media skills for public engagement

This study aims to equip dietitians with the skills to effectively engage the public on social media by developing an evidence-based training toolkit. Through focus groups and an environmental scan, we will identify training needs and best practices for digital communication. The toolkit will then be evaluated for its impact on dietitians' confidence, communication skills, and engagement. By strengthening dietitians' social media presence, this project supports public access to credible, science-based nutrition information.



**Sarah Finch, PhD, RD,
University of Prince Edward Island**

Development and Validation of the Nutrition Utilization and Treatment Response Insights tool for Rheumatoid Arthritis

This study aims to understand how people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) use nutrition-related complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies like supplements and special diets alongside their prescribed treatments. We will create a tool called NUTRI_RA, to measure how these therapies affect patients' health and quality of life. The findings will help dietitians offer better guidance to patients, ensuring safe, evidence-based nutrition advice and improving patient care by addressing the risks and benefits of CAM therapies.



**Leticia Radin Pereira, PhD,
University of Calgary and
Isabella Barbosa Pereira
Carneiro, RD, Alberta Health
Services**

The relationship between body image and determinants of food choice in the postpartum period

Body changes after childbirth can impact body image, which may influence motivations for food choices. This study aims to survey ~200 Canadian individuals who have recently given birth, to investigate how body image and body dissatisfaction are associated with food choice motivations. Findings from this research have the potential to refine public health nutrition messaging, ensuring that food choice recommendations resonate with and meet the unique needs of those adjusting to body changes after childbirth.

2025 Successful Research Teams, continued



Jennifer Yeung, RD, Bruyere Health Continuing Care and Krystal Kehoe MacLeod, PhD, Bruyere Health Research Institute

Indigenous Foods as Therapy: Supporting Person-Centered Palliative Care for Métis, Inuit, and First Nations Patients and Families through Culturally Relevant and Safer Food

This study will create an informational toolkit to increase awareness of and offer guidance and recommendations for, the procurement, preparation, storage, and serving of culturally safer food options to Métis, Inuit, and First Nations patients receiving palliative care in a hospital setting. Part of this will include guidance on how food options can be customized as the role of food changes as patients progress through their palliative care journey from terminal illness diagnosis through to the last days of life.



Phillip Joy, PhD, RD, Mount Saint Vincent University

Voices of Nourishment: Developing Novel Curriculum Tools for 2SLGBTQ+ Cultural Safety

This innovative project will use participatory songwriting workshops to create culturally safe dietetic training materials, enhancing inclusivity and equity in nutrition care. By integrating 2SLGBTQ+ lived experiences into educational resources, this initiative aims to improve healthcare interactions, reduce bias, and support better health outcomes for diverse communities across Canada.

CFDR Research Results

CFDR congratulates investigators for completion of three projects in the 2024-25 fiscal year.



**Jessica Lieffers PhD RD,
University of Saskatchewan**

Title:

Introduction: Despite the strong interconnected nature between diet and oral health, Canadian research on the knowledge, attitudes, practices, and perspectives of dietitians and oral health professionals (OHP) regarding this topic is very limited.

Purpose: To explore self-perceived knowledge, attitudes, practices and perspectives of dietitians and OHP regarding nutrition for the prevention and management of oral diseases (with a focus on dental caries) using surveys and one-on-one semi-structured qualitative interviews.

Methods: Survey Studies: An online survey for dietitians and OHP was developed using a multi-step process (literature review; expert review; cognitive interviews). The final survey was available in English and French for dietitians and in English for OHP. The surveys were advertised to dietitians across Canada and OHP (e.g., dentists,

dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental therapists) across Saskatchewan from June-August 2021 using several channels (e.g., social media, e-mail lists, email to dental clinics, professional associations, word of mouth). Qualitative Interview Studies: These studies were guided by Qualitative Description. Dietitians and OHPs completed a semi-structured interview (in person, Zoom or phone) to understand their perspectives on nutrition and oral health (with a focus on dental caries). Participants were recruited using several strategies (e.g., leaving their name at the end of the survey study, word of mouth, Facebook groups, email lists, emails to dental clinics). Interviews (audio recorded and transcribed verbatim) occurred from November 2022-October 2023. Data analysis was conducted using NVIVO 12 and 14 and was guided by Braun and Clarke's framework for thematic analysis.

Results: Dietitian Survey Study: In total, n=235 responses were included. Most respondents (84.2%) agreed/strongly agreed a strong relationship exists between nutrition and dental caries. Overall, 75.4% of respondents rated their knowledge of foods that promote dental caries as "Good to Excellent" which is higher than those who provided the same rating for foods that are protective against dental caries (41.5%) and healthy eating behaviours for dental caries (46.1%). Most dietitians never

received education on nutrition and dental caries (85.5%); however, many were interested in further education on this topic. One-on-one nutrition counselling was the most common practice conducted by dietitians regarding nutrition and dental caries; in total, 64.3% of respondents reported conducting this activity frequently/occasionally. Collaboration practices between dietitians and OHP were reported to be conducted in a limited capacity; however, respondents were enthusiastic about future opportunities. Barriers to practising in this area were experienced by 58.7% of respondents; inadequate knowledge was the most common barrier. OHP Survey Study: Data from n=137 respondents were included; dental hygienists comprised the largest group of respondents (45%). Overall, 90% agreed or strongly agreed a strong relationship exists between nutrition and dental caries. For self-reported knowledge of nutrition and oral health, 96% of respondents rated their knowledge of foods promoting dental caries as "Good to Excellent," while 82% felt the same about foods protective against dental caries and 92% felt the same about protective eating behaviors for dental caries. In total, 78% of respondents had received education and training on nutrition and dental caries. For nutrition counselling for dental caries, depending on the age group, 55-84% of respondents reported frequently or

occasionally carrying out this activity. Collaboration practices between dietitians and OHP were reported to be conducted in a limited capacity; however, respondents were enthusiastic about future collaboration opportunities. Barriers related to nutrition and dental caries were experienced by 77% of respondents; lack of patient motivation or interest (72%) was the most common.

Dietitian Interview Study: In total, 19 interviews were conducted with dietitians from various practice areas including clinical (inpatient/outpatient (n=7), clinical (long term care) (n=5), clinical (private practice) (n=3), and public health/ community (n=4). Following data analysis, five themes were generated which included dietitians role and engagement in oral health; barriers to dietitian involvement in oral health; collaboration between dietitians and OHP; solutions to improve dietitian involvement in collaboration; and dietitian interest in further education on nutrition and dental caries.

OHP Interview Study: Nineteen participants completed the interviews and received their transcripts for review. One participant later withdrew following review of their transcript, leaving 18 respondents for the final analysis. Participants held various professional titles, including dental hygienist (n=11), dentist (n=1), dental assistant (n=1), and dental therapist (n=1). In addition, some had dual roles, such as dental hygienist and dental therapist (n=2), and dental hygienist and dental assistant (n=2). Three themes were generated Perspectives and Practices; Barriers and

Facilitators; and Future Needs with numerous subthemes were generated from the data.

Conclusion: Findings from this project have sparked an important dialogue in dietetic practice for nutrition and oral health which to date has been largely absent in Canada. First steps to helping to increase activities in this area could include more collaborative educational initiatives for dietitians and OHP and development of national guidelines on nutrition and oral health.



**Rhona Hanning PhD,
University of Waterloo
Sandra Juutilainen PhD RD,
Toronto Metropolitan
University**

Towards Decolonizing Dietetic Practice

Ten years after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action, there is still much to do to honour the Calls and integrate cultural safety & anti-racism into dietetic education, standards of practice and service provision for Indigenous Peoples. The Towards Decolonizing Dietetic

Practice project encompassed:

- a) a scoping review of the published literature on integrating TRC Calls to Action (&/or decolonization, cultural safety, anti-racism) into the education & standards of practice for health professions & health service provision for Indigenous Peoples, as relevant to dietetics in Canada yielding 76 full-text sources;
- b) interviews with 14 Indigenous leaders in education and health to identify current activities, practices, and processes towards decolonization among health professions in Canada and perceived opportunities to advance dietetic practice;
- c) A survey completed by 20/28 dietetic education and training programs across Canada on actions to support Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation; and
- d) Knowledge mobilization through integrated conference presentations, a workshop and end-of-grant publications.

Findings from this research highlight current action towards the TRC Calls to Action within dietetics in Canada and promising practices identified by the literature and leaders within healthcare and education. We hope that findings from this research will support positive action towards reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization across the fields of dietetic practice in Canada.



Jean Phillippe Drouin-Chartier,
Universite Laval

Plant-based dietary patterns and coronary artery calcification in adults with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia

Background: The role of plant-rich diet in heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HeFH) management is not yet fully understood.

Objective: We examined the association between plant-based dietary patterns, apolipoprotein B (apoB) levels, and coronary artery calcification (CAC) in HeFH.

Methods: A total of 232 adults with genetically confirmed

HeFH were included in this cross-sectional study. Adherence to plant-based dietary patterns was quantified using the Healthful Plant-based Diet Index (hPDI) and the Unhealthful Plant-based Diet Index (uPDI), calculated from food frequency questionnaire data. ApoB was measured from fasting plasma samples. CAC was measured using computed tomography.

Results: Evidence of inverse associations between the hPDI and apoB levels were observed among participants of male sex ($n=107$: β per 10% hPDI increment= -0.08 , 95% CI: -0.14 , -0.02 g/L; female, $n=125$: $\beta=-0.03$, 95% CI: -0.10 , 0.03 g/L; $P_{\text{interaction}}=0.22$), those with a LDL-receptor negative genotype ($n=177$; $\beta=-0.09$, 95% CI: -0.14 , -0.04 g/L; receptor-defective genotype, $n=55$: $\beta=0.04$, 95% CI: -0.05 , 0.12 g/L; $P_{\text{interaction}}=0.005$), and those with lipoprotein(a) levels <100 nmol/L ($n=158$; $\beta=-0.08$, 95% CI: -0.13 , -0.02 g/L; Lp(a) >100 nmol/L, $n=74$: $\beta=-0.01$, 95% CI: -0.09 , 0.07 g/L; $P_{\text{interaction}}=0.07$). No

evidence of effect modification by concomitant cholesterol-lowering pharmacotherapy was found (no medication/oral cholesterol-lowering therapy, $n=178$: $\beta=-0.07$, 95% CI: -0.12 , -0.01 g/L; PCSK9 inhibitor w/wo oral therapy, $n=54$: $\beta=-0.07$, 95% CI: -0.16 , 0.01 g/L; $P_{\text{interaction}}=0.68$). The uPDI tended to be positively associated with apoB levels among the same subgroups. No evidence of association was found between the plant-based diet indices and CAC in the overall sample.

Conclusions: Healthful plant-rich diets are inversely associated with apoB levels in adults with HeFH, independent of concomitant cholesterol-lowering medication. Causal confirmation of this relationship being more pronounced in specific subgroups could pave the way for precision nutrition in HeFH management. Longer-term benefits of healthful plant-rich diets remain however unclear due to the lack of evidence of an association with CAC.



Summarized Balance Sheet

As of Aug 31, 2025

ASSETS	2025	2024
Cash	207,218	98,393
Accounts receivable	26,981	27,500
Prepaid expenses	4,557	-
Investments	1,652,488	1,663,995
	1,891,244	1,789,888
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities	83,156	33,397
NET ASSETS		
Restricted	1,430,530	1,451,025
Unrestricted	377,558	305,466
	1,808,088	1,756,491
	1,891,244	1,789,888

CFDR Donors

2024-25

CFDR is grateful to our donors who believe in the value of dietetic and nutrition research in building a healthy Canada.

Summarized Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Fund Balances

Year Ended Aug 31, 2025

REVENUES	2025	2024
Donations - Corporate	0	10,000
Donations - Individuals	4,856	104,025
Investment Income	88,237	88,818
Unrealized gain on investments	60,104	159,771
	153,197	362,614
EXPENSES		
Research Program		
Open Grant Competition	80,533	58,653
Expenses	1,035	13,081
Administration	17,166	56,871
Governance	6,306	16,069
Research Communications	(3,440)	23,986
Fundraising	0	3,175
Marketing and communications	0	21,421
Revenue over Expenses	51,597	169,358
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	1,756,491	1,587,133
Net Assets - End of Year	1,808,088	1,756,491

Note: a complete set of audited financial statements is available from CFDR on request.



Staff

Janis Randall Simpson PhD RD FDC FCNS

Executive Director (October 2024 -)

Volunteer Committees

CFDR relies on the dedicated volunteers who help ensure the success of our programs. Thanks to all of those who donated their time and expertise this year.

2024-25 CFDR Scientific Review Committee

Chair

Alison Duncan PhD RD FDC FCNS

Professor, Human Health and Nutritional Sciences, University of Guelph

Committee Members

Marcia Cooper PhD RD FDC

Research Scientist, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences, Health Canada

Roseann Nasser RD

Saskatchewan Health Authority

Russell de Souza ScD RD

Assistant Professor, Department of Health Research Methods, McMaster University

Chris Marinangeli PhD RD

Director, Centre for Regulatory Research and Innovation
Protein Industries Canada

Janis Randall Simpson PhD RD FDC FCNS

Professor Emerita
University of Guelph

Flora Wang PhD

Manager, Nutrition & Scientific Affairs
Canadian Sugar Institute

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Research Scientist, Health Canada
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Tina Stewart MHS RD

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Clinical Dietitian
Vancouver, BC



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99 Yorkville Avenue, Second Floor
Toronto, ON M5R 1C1

e. info@cfdr.ca w. www.cfdr.ca

Charitable Registration No. 892702150 RR0001

Your donation to Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research will help to fund practice-based dietetic research so that dietitians can ask the important nutrition-related questions and seek answers, ultimately leading to improved patient care, and the health of Canadians.