INTRODUCTION TO NUTRITIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY
Nutritional Sciences/Population Health 621
Spring 2018

Instructors/Lecturers: Julie Mares, MSPH, RD, MSPH, PhD, Professor
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
1063 WARF Building
262-8044; jmarespe@wisc.edu

Tara LaRowe, PhD, RDN, CD, Faculty Associate
Coordinator-Didactic Program in Dietetics
Department of Nutritional Sciences
1415 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
265-8928; tllarowe@wisc.edu

Krista Christensen, MPH, PhD, Associate Scientist
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
1069 WARF Building
265-3192; krista.christensen@wisc.edu

Thomas Lawler, M.S., RD, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
1060 WARF Building
tlawler2@wisc.edu

Dates and Location: Wednesday and Friday 11 AM-12:10, January 30, 2018 to March 23, 2018: WARF Building, Room 511

Course objectives:
NS 621, 1 credit: This course is designed for graduate students in Nutritional Sciences and Population Health. The purpose is to introduce students to conceptual frameworks and skills needed in order to understand how to evaluate relationships of nutritional states to health and chronic disease in large samples of people. There is a focus on interpreting findings of epidemiological studies and clinical trials in the scientific literature, and integrating them with other knowledge in nutritional research and epidemiological research. The purpose of this course is to 1) to provide students with the ability to understand and critically evaluate the nutritional epidemiology literature; 2) to provide students with basic knowledge to incorporate methods of assessing dietary and nutritional status of individuals into future studies. There is a focus on chronic disease epidemiology rather than acute nutritional deficiencies.

Prerequisites: A course in nutrition and a course in statistics; graduate student status or consent of instructor.

To enable students to:
1. Discuss the complexity of assessing the diets of free-living individuals and studying relationships to health:
a. Apply knowledge about the contributions that nutritional epidemiology can make to understanding relationships between food and health, in relation to other approaches used in nutritional sciences.
b. Describe limitations of this method of acquiring knowledge and future directions that show promise for greater understanding.

2. Describe the study designs and statistical tools commonly used in the nutritional epidemiology literature to report the magnitude and statistical significance of relationships between diet and health or disease outcomes.

3. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of assessing nutrition through biological markers, individual nutrients, supplement use and adherence to dietary patterns.

4. Choose a dietary intake instrument appropriate to particular research designs and questions.

5. Critically interpret the results of studies in the nutritional epidemiologic literature based on potential for bias, confounding and effect modification.

6. Describe national and state surveys that monitor the nutritional status of the U.S. population.

**Grading:**
Completion of Diet Assessment Project 20%
Midterm Exam – Take Home 30%
Final Paper* 40%
Class Participation 10%

*Read and critique an assigned paper on nutritional exposures relating to a common chronic disease. Plan and discuss papers in groups. Present as part of a group in class. Prepare a five-page paper that describes and critiques the paper using skills learned in class. This will include critiques of 1) Study hypotheses and background which supports them, 2) Measurement of nutritional exposures, 3) Study design 4) Statistical approach 5) Results and interpretation 6) Conclusions and how these relate to the overall body of evidence using Bradford Hill criteria.

**Diet Assessment Project.** Complete, as a study participant, assessments of your diet two National Cancer Institute web-based tools: Diet History Questionnaire and automated Self-administered 24-hour Recall (ASA24) system. Complete: 1) a questionnaire about this experience, 2) a worksheet about these diet assessment resources after discussing class results in class.

**Textbooks**

**REQUIRED:**
Nutritional Epidemiology by Walter Willett (3rd edition, Oxford University Press, 2013). Available at University Bookstore.

**Additional resources (on Reserve at Ebling library) are:**
Intuitive Biostatistics by Harvey Motulsky (Oxford University Press, 1995)


Epidemiology:” Beyond the Basics by Moyses Szklo and Javier Nieto (2nd edition, Jones and Bartlett Publications, 2007)

Critical Appraisal or Epidemiologic Studies and Clinical Trials by Mark Elwood (2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1:</td>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF NUTRITIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY-ROLE OF THIS SCIENCE IN EVALUATING DIET AND DISEASE RELATIONSHIPS; OVERVIEW OF ROLE OF DIET IN DISEASE CAUSATION.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Julie Mares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>Willett, Chapter One, pages 1-4. (Up to “Correlation Studies”) and 10-11 (Interpretation of Epidemiological Data” to “Interpretation of Null Associations”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An Introduction to Epidemiology Rothman, KJ, Oxford University Press, 2002; Chapter 2. What is Causation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This series not only addresses causal criteria but also issues of strength of association (class 3) and confounding and effect modification (class 4):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2:</td>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGNS: OBSERVATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND CLINICAL TRIALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Julie Mares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Major Observational Studies:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Health Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harvard Nurse’s Health Study and Male Health Professional Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish Mammography Cohort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Class 3: February 7**  
Instructor: Krista Christensen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Major Clinical Trials:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Health Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Health Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Health Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIRED READING:**  
Willett Chapter One, page 4 “Correlation Studies” to and page 10  
Chapter 16, p 357-362, up to “Types of Nutritional Policies.”

**ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:**  


Freudenheim JL, Study design and hypothesis testing: issues in the evaluation of evidence from research in nutritional epidemiology. Am J Clin Nutr 1999;69(suppl): 1315S-1321S.


**Class 4: February 9**  
Instructor: Krista Christensen

| HOW STRONG IS DIET’S INFLUENCE ON DISEASE?:  
STATISTICAL TOOLS USED TO DESCRIBE AND INTERPRET EPIDEMIOLOGIC DATA |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|

**REQUIRED READING:**  
Willett chapter 1, page 10-13; chapter 13, page 327-328.


Odds ratios: p 212-216  
Relative risk: p 223-224  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8: Confidence Interval of the Difference or ratio of Two Proportions: Prospective Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9: Confidence Interval of the Difference or ratio of Two Proportions: Case-Control Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10: What is a P-value?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 18: Introduction to Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 19: Linear Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 31: Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 32: Logistic Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 33: Comparing Survival Curves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 38: The Big Picture, p303-306.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFESTYLE AND OTHER CONFOUNDING FACTORS THAT MAY EXPLAIN OR ALTER RELATIONSHIPS OF DIET TO DISEASE AND HOW TO CONTROL FOR THEM: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ENERGY ADJUSTMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

REQUIRED READING:

Willett Chapter 1, page 10-13.
Willett et al Adjustment for total energy intake in epidemiologic studies. AJCN 1997 65 (S)1220-8
Chapter 11 p260-265; Summary on p 283.
Willett: Chapter 13- p317-319 (Multivariate analysis)


ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES
Willett
Chapter 10 Assessment of Physical Activity
Chapter 11 Implications of Total Energy Intake for Epidemiological Analyses
Chapter 12 Correction for the Effects of Measurement Error


Assignments:
Diet Assessment Project Passed Out

Class 5: February 14
Instructor: Tom Lawler

ANALYTIC STRATEGIES TO EVALUATE GENETIC AND OTHER FACTORS MODIFYING DIET AND DISEASE RELATIONSHIPS: Resources for genetic data in epidemiological studies

REQUIRED READING:
Willett Chapter 14.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:


Class 6: February 16
Instructor: Julie Mares

MEASUREMENT OF NUTRITIONAL EXPOSURES I: OVERVIEW OF TECHNIQUES; OVERVIEW OF DIETARY EXPOSURES; ASSESSING DIET EXPOSURE WITH BIOLOGICAL MARKERS. ASSESSING DIET: INTRODUCTION AND VARIATION IN DIET

REQUIRED READING:
Willett W. Nutritional Epidemiology. Chapter 3, “Nature of Variation in Diet” (Overview- not details)


Willett W. Nutritional Epidemiology. Chapter 2, “Nutrients and Food”

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:
Willett W. Nutritional Epidemiology, Chapter 8, Biochemical Indicators of Dietary Intake

**Assignments: Diet Assessment Project Due**

**Class 7, 8: February 21 and 23**  
**Instructor: Tara LaRowe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MEASUREMENT OF NUTRITIONAL EXPOSURES II: ANALYSIS OF DIETARY DATA-DAILY AND FOOD FREQUENCY METHODS; NUTRIENT COMPOSITION AND SUPPLEMENT DATABASES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **REQUIRED READING (CLASS 7):**  
Willett W.  Nutritional Epidemiology. Chapter 5: Food Frequency Methods  
**REQUIRED READING (CLASS 8):**  
Subar AF, et al., “Comparative validation of the Block, Willett, and National Cancer Institute food frequency questionnaires: the Eating at America’s Table Study.”  AJE. 2001;154(12):1089-99.  
Willett W.  Nutritional Epidemiology. Chapter 6 Reproducibility and Validation of Food Frequency Questionnaires  
**ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:**  
Willett W.  Nutritional Epidemiology. Chapters 4 and 5: 24-hour Recall and Food Record Methods and Food Frequency Methods  

**References:**  
REQUIRED READING:

Please look at briefly:
Kipnis V and Freedman LS. “Impact of Exposure Measurement Error in Nutritional Epidemiology.” JNCI. 2008;100:1658-9 and parent article:

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES:
Willett W. Nutritional Epidemiology Chapter 6, “Reproducibility and Validity of Food Frequency Questionnaires and Chapter 12, “Correction for Measurement Error”

ASSIGNMENTS
Final Project Passed Out

| Class 12: March 9 | HISTORY LESSONS: In search of the Magic Bullet
| Instructor: Julie Mares | Beta-Carotene, Folate, Fish oils, Vitamin D
| | Groups meet to Discuss Final Projects
| | Midterm Part 2 Due
| | Midtem Part 3 passed out (due 3/30)

| Class 13: March 14 | NUTRITION MONITORING IN THE US
| Instructor: Julie Mares | REQUIRED READING
| | Willett Chapter 15.
| | National Monitoring and Surveillance
| | ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL RESOURCES
| | (Erdman, JW, MacDonald, IA, Zeisel, SH, eds.) Washington: International Life Science Institute, 2012

| Class 14: March 16 | INTERPRETING THE EPIDEMIOLOGIC LITERATURE:
| | FINAL PAPER GROUP 1: To be announced

| Class 15: March 21 | INTERPRETING THE EPIDEMIOLOGIC LITERATURE:
| | FINAL PAPER GROUP 2: To be announced

| Class 16: March 23 | INTERPRETING THE EPIDEMIOLOGIC LITERATURE:
| | FINAL PAPER GROUP 3: To be announced

| EVALUATIONS |