

# Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2011 Survey on Member Research Activities, Needs, and Perceptions

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**R**ESearch RESULTING IN evidence-based recommendations is the foundation of nutrition and dietetics practice. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy) conducted surveys of active members who are registered dietitians (RDs) with a doctorate and members of the Research Dietetic Practice Group (RDPG) in 2000, 2002, and 2006.<sup>1-3</sup> In 2011, the Academy (then the American Dietetic Association) conducted another survey of members with a doctorate and members of the RDPG with a post-baccalaureate degree (ie, master's degree or doctorate). The main objective of the 2011 Researcher Survey was to better understand member participation in research, defined as preparing applications/proposals, designing and conducting studies, preparing manuscripts for publication, and presenting at professional meetings, as well as supervising any of these activities. The survey also included questions about funding and the degree to which the RDs' research interests correlated to Academy research priorities. The primary aim of this article is to summarize findings from the 2011 survey and discuss implications related to research among RDs.

## SURVEY DETAILS

The survey was conducted by Readex Research, Inc, on behalf of the Academy, which provided oversight and direction for all aspects of the study. The survey consisted of 20 questions: 17 multiple-choice questions and three open-ended questions. Data from the three open-ended questions were analyzed with NVivo10 qualitative analysis software (version 10,

2012, QSR International Pty Ltd). The study population included all 2,320 RDPG members with e-mail access and a post-baccalaureate degree at the time of sample selection in January 2011.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Participants' Characteristics

A total of 727 Academy members (31% response rate) completed the survey. Presented results include 702 respondents with a doctorate (n=615; 80%) and a master's degree (n=87; 12%); however, most results are for 564 respondents (80%) who indicated participation in research during the past 5 years (492 respondents with a doctorate, 72 respondents with a master's degree) (Figure 1). On average, neither respondents with doctorates nor with master's degrees spent the majority of their professional time conducting research; two thirds of respondents with doctorates and three fourths of respondents with master's degrees reported spending between one fourth and one half of their professional time doing other activities. Reasons for not participating in research for those with doctorates included not being relevant to job (42%), interested but lacking time (25%), and personal reasons (25%) (eg, retirement or working less time to stay home to raise children).

### Areas of Research Interest and Activity

Primary areas of research included social sciences (58% among those with doctorates, 42% among those with master's degrees) and nutrition (40% among those with doctorates, 57% among those with master's degrees). The primary focus for social sciences research was public health/community nutrition (28% among those with doctorates, 15% among those with master's degrees)

and for nutrition it was nutrition interventions with individuals (22% among those with doctorates, 38% among those with master's degrees). Regardless of degree, the areas of research deemed most important for the future of dietetics was "nutrition and lifestyle change intervention to prevent obesity and chronic diseases" (96%); "Nutrition Care Process and health outcomes measures" (74%); "safe, secure, and sustainable food supply" (73%); and "nutrients and systems biology (nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics)" (73%).

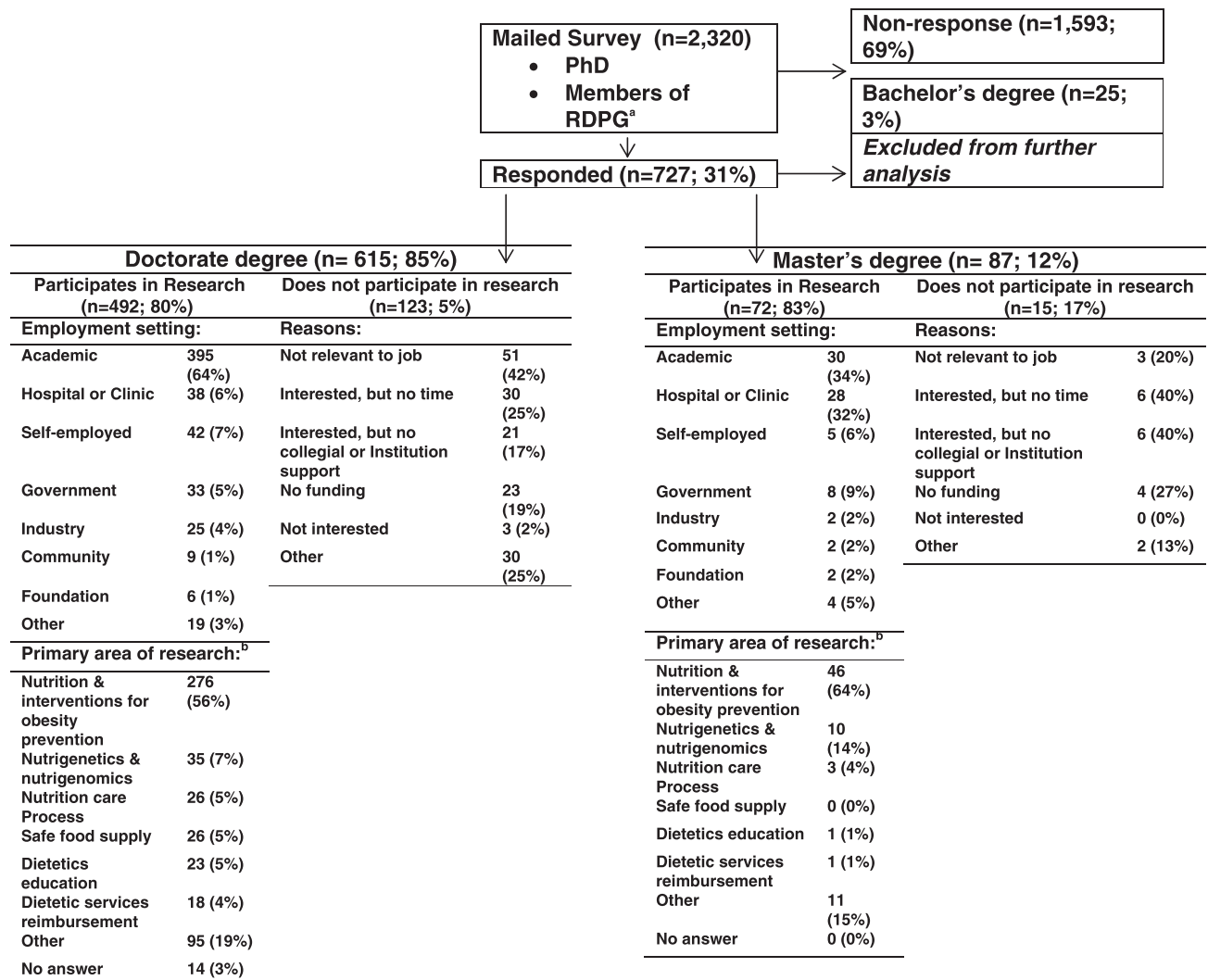
The most frequently cited area of primary research that best related to the Academy's current research priorities was nutrition lifestyle change interventions to prevent or treat obesity and chronic disease (56% and 64% among respondents with doctorates and master's degrees, respectively) (Figure 1). Interestingly, 11% of respondents with doctorates yet 32% of respondents with master's degrees were involved in a National Institutes of Health-funded Clinical and Translational Science Award Institute/Center. Moreover, 53% of respondents with doctorates and 28% of respondents with master's degrees said they were familiar with this program, but had not participated.

### Projects and Role

Between 2006 and 2011, respondents with doctorates and master's degrees participated on 482 and 72 research projects, respectively. Most respondents' role was principal or co-principal investigator (84% doctorates, 47% master's degrees) or co-investigator (54% doctorates, 32% master's degrees).

### Funding

Respondents with doctorates secured funding for 456 projects/proposals, whereas respondents with master's degrees had 56 proposals funded (mean 3.7 projects for those with



**Figure 1.** Research survey response rates, employment setting, and primary area of research interest of respondents. <sup>a</sup>RDPG=Research Dietetic Practice Group. <sup>b</sup>Primary area of research interest that best correlated to the research priorities of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

doctorates and 4.5 projects/proposals for those with master's degrees) between 2006 and 2011. On average 8% (n=39) of respondents with doctorates and 10% (n=7) of respondents with master's degrees reported spending 50% to 75% of their professional time conducting externally or internally funded research projects. Relatively more respondents with master's degrees (54%, n=39) than those with doctorates (15%, n=73) had more than 75% of their professional time funded by research projects. Further, more respondents with doctorates (28%, n=161) than master's degrees (21%, n=15) did not have any of their professional time funded by research. In

terms of the amount of dollars awarded/secured as total amount of funding in the past 5 years, 123 and 19 projects/proposals from respondents with doctorates and master's degrees, respectively, received \$1,000,000 or more (25% of those with doctorates, 26% of those with master's degrees). For all research conducted by respondents, the federal government funded fully or partially most research projects in the past 5 years.

**Publications**

As a result of research conducted between 2006 and 2011, respondents with doctorates and master's degrees

published 342 and 36 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals, respectively; and in non-peer-reviewed publications, 130 and 14 articles, respectively. Furthermore, respondents with doctorates and master's degrees published 179 dissertations and nine theses, respectively. Most research was published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, and *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

**Presentations**

Research conducted between 2006 and 2011 resulted in 306 peer-reviewed

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