

Making the Case for Research

Nutrition research encompasses a wide variety of activities from tracking patient outcomes, quality improvement projects, and testing new interventions, to surveying customer acceptance of menu items and conducting community needs assessments. As RDNs, research is the foundation of our profession- providing the basis for practice, education and policy. Participation in research can often be incorporated into daily activities and is a way to fully realize our scope of practice.

Dietetics research is a dynamic collaborative that relies on the participation of RDNs and DTRs to answer questions that are relevant to practice and lead to improved outcomes for patient and populations. Making research a priority can enhance the quality of care that you provide to your patients every day. As an RDN you may be responsible for presenting research projects to your manager or director.

Here are some tips for talking about participating in research:

Why is research important to your facility?

- Research contributes to outcomes data which is becoming increasingly important in the healthcare setting
 - Outcomes data can produce patient safety, readmissions, or quality improvement information statistics to demonstrate positive health outcomes
 - Outcomes data can drive revenue and reimbursement at your facility
- Participating in research reflects positively on your department and can appeal to internal stakeholders such as facility directors

How does research benefit your department?

- As a manager, participating in research can raise your department's profile and set you apart
- Research often provides additional opportunities to collaborate with physicians and other healthcare providers
- Showing quality improvement through research may demonstrate the importance of the RDN in improving outcomes
- Research can provide performance enhancement and quality improvement opportunities

Your Research Resource



How does research contribute to staff professional development?

- Participating in research provides additional training, free CPE opportunities, access to new tools and cutting edge information
- Exposes students and interns to the research process early in their career
- Participating RDNs can bring information back to colleagues through lunch & learns or other presentations
- Participating in research can further develop skills such as organizational ability, time management, and critical thinking

Tips for talking to your Manager:

You should be prepared to make the case to your manager that the benefits of participating in research far outweigh any perceived barriers. Your emphasis should be on the return-on-investment that this project will produce. Provide examples of the positive outcomes your facility and patients can expect such as decreased readmissions, improved patient care, or enhanced efficiency.

- Whether you are participating in research organized through DPBRN, a local University, or designing a project yourself, you should be able to clearly explain why the study is important and your or your RDN's role in the research. Your manager will need to know what you will be doing, how much time it will take, and how your usual tasks may be affected. It may be helpful to present some background on any relevant existing data and the need for further study.
- One of your manager's biggest concerns may be that research takes you and your RDNs away from patient care activities. Address this concern directly by sharing with your director how you plan to balance the extra responsibilities. Consider how other staff or interns can help balance your responsibilities. Ex: "Staff will be asked to prioritize patient care activities above the study as needed to meet facility demands" Or "Data collection would occur during a period when interns are able to provide staff relief."
- Explain how research fits into your scope of practice as RDNs; Consider referencing Academy resources such as the Dietetics Career Development Guide & associated definitions and Standards of Professional Practice materials



For more information:

Visit eatrightpro.org/dpbrn for research resources. Consider joining DPBRN! Simply email DPBRN@eatright.org with your Academy member number to request membership. You will get monthly email updates of the DPBRN and notifications when there are new projects looking for participation.

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