

Scientific Integrity Principles:

Scientific Activities including Research FAQs

Did you know that most DPG/MIGs are engaging in scientific activities? As a result, they are required to be in compliance with the Academy's Scientific Integrity Principles¹. The following FAQs can help answer frequently asked questions around this topic.

What does the Academy mean by 'scientific activities'?

Scientific activities include any of the following:

- Generating new data (ex: gathering survey data or patient/client information)
- Aggregating existing data (ex: pulling information from an existing database)
- Distributing scientific information (ex: providing information as a media spokesperson, writing CEUs)
- Quality improvement projects (ex: collecting institutional electronic clinical quality measures (eCQM) data on malnutrition using tools developed by the Academy)

What does the Academy mean by 'research'?

Research is defined by the Code of Federal Regulations as:

*"...a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."*²

I am organizing and evaluating existing data, but not collecting any new data. Is that a scientific activity?

Yes. If the activity is initiated or funded by the Academy or its affiliated Foundation or DPG/MIGs, then it needs to follow the Academy's Scientific Integrity Principles to be in compliance.

Disseminating scientific information is a scientific activity. What does this mean?

Scientific activity goes beyond data collection and analyses. Since most DPG/MIGs are involved in some aspect of distributing scientific information, these DPG/MIGs are engaging in scientific activities. Consequently, compliance with the Academy's Scientific Integrity Principles is required.

Examples include:

- Acting as an official Academy spokesperson media contact
- Distributing Academy Position or Practice Papers and Guidelines
- Providing continuing professional education (CPE) opportunities approved by the Center for Professional Development, such as CPE for Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) or DPG meetings/conferences and newsletter articles.
- Communication (print, webinar, oral, etc.) of findings from any scientific activities conducted or funded by the Academy
- Development of evidence-based nutrition products (e.g. guidelines, websites, presentations, etc.) as part of the Evidence-Analysis Library (EAL)

- Development of nutrition education information for the public, including eatright.org and Kids Eat Right

I am planning to conduct a quality-improvement (QI) project. Is that a scientific activity?

Yes. Although QI data is not generalizable beyond the specific facility or institution where the data was collected, there is a fine line between data collection for QI alone and data usage for broader research questions. Therefore, QI activities initiated or funded by the Academy or its affiliated Foundation, DPG/MIGs are considered scientific activities. As such, QI projects need to follow the Academy's Scientific Integrity Principles to be in compliance.

What does 'intramural' research mean?

Intramural research is research that is conducted within the Academy. In other words, it includes scientific activities that are conducted by an Academy unit, including DPG/MIGs, and the Academy Foundation.

Examples include:

- Research projects conducted by the Dietetics Practice Based Research Network (DPBRN)
- Development of evidence-based nutrition guidelines from systematic reviews conducted by the Evidence Analysis Library (EAL)
- Aggregation of data conducted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Health Informatics Infrastructure (ANDHII)
- Surveys conducted by marketing, membership, committees, and DPGs
- Quality-improvement projects conducted by the Nutrition Services Coverage unit
- Program evaluation conducted by the Academy Foundation

What does 'extramural' research mean?

Extramural research is research that is conducted external to the Academy. However, it is funded, in whole or in part, by an Academy unit, including DPGs/MIGs, and the Academy Foundation.

Examples include:

- Research grants to dietetic interns, graduate students, independent investigators, and Academy researchers by the Academy Foundation
- Research grants to dietetic interns, graduate students, independent researchers, and Academy researchers by DPGs
- Academy research or project contracts to conduct surveys and professional evaluations by research organizations

Is it necessary to publicize findings from scientific activities?

Although not required, every effort should be made to publish findings from Academy intra- or extramural research, regardless of scientific outcome or funding source. No funders or funding agreements may include restrictions on the ability to publish outcomes.

Publication in peer-reviewed journals is encouraged, but for smaller projects or those unsuited to peer-reviewed journals, other outlets such as DPG newsletters, may be appropriate. Authorship guidelines for

intramural scientific activities conducted by the Academy have been established and are based on the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors guidelines³. Publication should clearly follow Principle VI, and include disclosure of funding source and conflicts of interest.

Where can I get more information or ask questions?

Please consult the following resources:

- “A Unifying Vision for Scientific Decision Making: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Scientific Integrity Principles” by Tappenden, et al.¹
- Webinar (please find slides [here](#))
- Ask an Academy representative (contact your designated DPG manager or contact the Academy’s Research team- risa@eatright.org)

References

1. Tappenden KA, et al. *A unifying vision for scientific decision making: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Scientific Integrity Principles*. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2015;115:1486-1490.
2. Code of Federal Regulations. Title 45 Public Welfare, Department of Health and Human Services Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects. Revised January 15, 2009. Effective July 14, 2009.
3. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors guidelines are available here: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/>