



Questions and Answers:

UCLA's Dr. Tatiana Diacova on IAFNS' Best Practices for Gut Microbiome Research Paper

1. How did you come to be involved in this effort?

I was serving as a graduate student representative on the ASN Nutritional Microbiology GEM when the Microbiome Expert Group convened for the first time and decided that there was a need in reviewing existing best practices. Dr. Phil Karl was one of the Expert Group members and the Chair of the GEM at the time. He and Marie approached me with the opportunity to get involved.

2. What role did you play?

I was responsible for developing the project protocol, reviewing the existing literature, extracting best practices/gaps/considerations, collating the extracted data into spreadsheets, writing the manuscript, developing manuscript figures/tables. I also prepared a few short presentations on the project progress to be presented at various Expert Group-IAFNS meetings. All the abovementioned tasks were performed under the supervision of Dr. Karl and guidance from IAFNS' Marie Latulippe.

3. What role did your colleagues on the expert committee play?

The conceptualization and design of the project was informed by the Expert Group members. They also reviewed progress at several timepoints and provided input and feedback.

4. What was most challenging about this effort?

The most challenging part was to summarize the extracted data and present it in a way that captured all the important details, while also remaining succinct and reader friendly. Another challenging part was to decide on the definition of “points of agreement” and then effectively communicate these points in the manuscript.

5. What did you learn from the experience and how did it change your thinking?

This was a completely transformative experience for me as a budding independent researcher. This project allowed me to gain relevant skills in all the stages of manuscript preparation starting from protocol development all the way to addressing feedback from peer reviewers. This experience boosted my self-confidence as a researcher and independent scientific thinker.

6. Any final advice you can share for anyone engaging in this type of group effort?

Communicate with the team members well and communicate often. Setting clearly defined short- and long-term goals with deadlines may also be helpful in moving a project along.