



# VITAMIN D RESEARCHERS RESPOND TO MISGUIDING GUIDELINES

Importance of Vitamin D in health maintenance, disease prevention, and longevity

## 2024 INTERNATIONAL VITAMIN D EXPERT FORUM

### Clearing Confusion Around Vitamin D

Not sure what to do about vitamin D for yourself or your patients? Follow this educational event designed for the general public and practitioners alike.

**REGISTER FOR UPDATES**

[GRASSROOTSHEALTH.NET/2024FORUM](https://grassrootshealth.net/2024forum)

How to safely and effectively apply Vitamin D research into everyday life and practice

#### HOSTED BY

**Richard Cheng, MD, PhD**

*Orthomolecular Medicine News Service*

**Jen Aliano, MS, CCN**

*GrassrootsHealth*

#### LEAD RESEARCHERS FOR PANEL

**Michael Holick, MD, PhD**

**William Grant, PhD**



**PRESENTATIONS & INTERVIEWS LEADING UP TO LIVE EVENT**



**LIVE FORUM & EXPERT PANEL**  
Monday, September 30th, 2024  
7-9am PT

**CONTACT:** [jen@grassrootshealth.org](mailto:jen@grassrootshealth.org)



## Event Details

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Healthcare providers, health educators, individual consumers, and those interested in improving public health.

### KEY POINTS

1. The importance of Vitamin D in health maintenance, disease prevention, and longevity, as supported by research
2. The widespread insufficiency/deficiency of Vitamin D and the influential role of updated guidelines
3. The safety of Vitamin D supplementation
4. The potential clinical applications of high dose Vitamin D (autoimmune disease, cancer, etc.)
5. The practical aspects of vitamin D's role in health and how to apply Vitamin D research into everyday life and practice

Conclusion: Given its wide safety margin, effectiveness in preventing and even reversing chronic diseases, and its affordability, there is no reason not to optimize Vitamin D supplementation. The evidence is clear: higher Vitamin D levels can provide significant health benefits with minimal risk when properly monitored. Therefore, optimizing Vitamin D intake should be a cornerstone of both individual healthcare and public health strategies.

### TWO MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE EVENT (#1)

**Ongoing Virtual Event:** Recorded presentations and individual papers covering recent advancements and research in vitamin D, released prior to and following the live event

- These will be housed on the official event webpage and referenced during the conclusion of the live forum; Refer to [www.grassrootshealth.net/2024forum](http://www.grassrootshealth.net/2024forum)

## TWO MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE EVENT (#2)

**Live Virtual Forum & Expert Panel (September 30<sup>th</sup>, 7–9am PT):** Held live via Zoom as a high-level summary roundtable discussion (Register at [www.grassrootshealth.net/2024forum](http://www.grassrootshealth.net/2024forum))

Goal one: to provide an interactive, public response from key vitamin D researchers and experts to the latest vitamin D guidelines update by the Endocrine Society

Goal two: to synthesize the latest research findings on vitamin D and provide actionable takeaways for the attendees, compiled at: [orthomolecular.org](http://orthomolecular.org).

### Live Event Agenda

**Welcome & Introduction** (15 min)

**Overall Quality and Shortcomings of Current Vitamin D Research & Guidelines**  
(10–15 min; Dr. Michael Holick)

**Basic Concepts Important to Understanding Vitamin D** (5–10 min; Dr. Sunil Wimalawansa)

**Summary of Practical and Clinical Uses of Vitamin D** (45 min)

Health outcomes related to vitamin D with recent research highlighted, from disease prevention to therapeutic use

- Osteoporosis, joint and bone diseases (Dr. Zhiwei Ning)
- Prenatal/newborn health (Dr. Carol Wagner)
- Cancer incidence and mortality (Dr. William Grant)
- Brain health, dementia, and cognitive disorders (Dr. William Grant)
- Immune Health: Reduced risk of cold/flu/COVID and other respiratory infections (Dr. Aileen Burford-Mason)
- Autoimmune disease (Dr. Aileen Burford-Mason)

**Vitamin D Safety and Contraindications** (5 min; Dr. Sunil Wimalawansa)

**Interactive Questions and Answers** (25 min)

**Closing Remarks** (5 min)

## Live Event Speakers and Moderators



**Michael F. Holick, Ph.D., M.D.**  
**(Expert Panel Moderator)**

Dr. Holick is a world-renowned pioneer of vitamin D research. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine, a Fellow of the American College of Nutrition, and a member of the American Association of Physicians. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the General Clinical Research Centers Program Award for Excellence in Clinical Research from NIH, American College of Nutrition's Communication Media Award, Best Docs in America, the Linus Pauling Functional Medicine Award from the Institute for Functional Medicine and the Linus Pauling Prize for Human Nutrition. Dr. Holick serves on a number of national committees and editorial boards and has organized and/or co-chaired several international symposia. He served as the chair for the Endocrine Society's Practice Guidelines on Vitamin D. He has authored more than 400 peer-reviewed publications, and written more than 200 review articles, as well as numerous book chapters.



**William B. Grant, Ph.D.**  
**(Expert Panel Moderator)**

Dr. Grant has a Ph.D. in physics from the University of California, Berkeley. He had a 30-year career in atmospheric sciences with an emphasis on developing and using laser radar (lidar) systems for remote sensing of atmospheric constituents with positions at SRI International, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory/California Institute of Technology, and NASA Langley Research Center. He turned to health research in 1996, using the ecological approach to link dietary factors to risk of Alzheimer's disease, resulting in the first paper linking diet to risk of Alzheimer's disease (Grant, 1997). Building on the work of the brothers Cedric and Frank Garland, he used NASA satellite data for solar UVB doses in July 1992 in ecological studies to show that 13 types of cancer (eight more than previously identified) had mortality rates inversely correlated with UVB doses (Grant, 2002). After retirement from NASA in 2004, he moved to San Francisco and formed the nonprofit organization [Sunlight, Nutrition and Health Research Center](#). He has published several additional ecological studies related to the association of UVB and various cancers, autism, and dental caries, and several ecological studies on diet and Alzheimer's disease, cancers, and rheumatoid arthritis. He has also carefully examined how observational studies and randomized clinical trials are conducted regarding vitamin D, resulting in several publications pointing out limitations of such studies and how they can be improved.



**Sunil Wimalawansa, M.D.,  
Ph.D., MBA, D.Sc.**

Dr. Wimalawansa is a clinician–scientist with over four decades of experience. A Professor of Medicine, Endocrinology & Nutrition, formerly “University Professor,” Chief of Endocrinology, Metabolism & Nutrition at UMDNJ/Rutgers University, and Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology at the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. His Ph.D. was in endocrine receptors and pathology; he has expertise in internal medicine, endocrinology, human nutrition, osteoporosis and metabolic bone diseases, diabetes, obesity, malnutrition, vitamin D, and environmental issues that affect water and sanitation and chronic kidney disease, focusing on disease prevention. He is a process consultant, Lean Six–Sigma executive, a board of directors of national and international organizations, and was a member of NIH, VA, DEA, and NASA scientific review committees. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award (2004) from a USA Foundation for contributions to science and humanity, the Dr. Boy Frame award for clinical excellence from the ASBMR in 1993, and the Oscar Gluck International Humanitarian Award (2008). Dr. Wimalawansa has published over 300 peer–reviewed research articles with over 11,000 citations and has written five medical books. He has conducted 250+ medical education–related teaching/training programs in several countries. He delivered over 500 invited national and international lectures and scientific presentations and is the author of the book, *Vitamin D: Everything You Need to Know*. His recent focus is on micronutrients, especially vitamin D, and optimal ways to use it and its metabolites to prevent and overcome diseases.



**Bruce Hollis, Ph.D.**

Dr. Hollis is a vitamin D research veteran and was Professor of Pediatrics at South Carolina University Medical Hospital. He has published many papers on the subjects of vitamin D and pregnancy, cancer, endocrinology, and other topics. His laboratory has focused on the measurement of vitamin D and its metabolites in biological fluids, and he has played a pivotal role in the development of assays to measure vitamin D and its metabolites. His laboratory’s methods were used over the last four decades to conduct hundreds of studies and trials and their assays for 25(OH)D and 1,25(OH)2D were the first ones to be cleared for clinical diagnosis work by the FDA in the late 1990’s. These tools were used to achieve primary goals of determining vitamin D mode of action in human health including calcium homeostasis, pregnancy, lactation and oncology which all continue into the present day. His laboratory was also the first to be awarded an IND by the FDA to conduct studies with elevated levels of vitamin D. This IND remains in effect and has been accessed by many investigators to conduct their own studies.



**Carol Wagner, M.D.**

Dr. Wagner is board-certified pediatrician and neonatologist at the Medical University of South Carolina and holds the rank of Professor of Pediatrics with tenure. Dr. Wagner received her undergraduate degree from Brown University and her M.D. degree from Boston University School of Medicine with subsequent training in Pediatrics and Neonatology at the University of Rochester (NY). She came to MUSC in 1992 and has advanced along the tenure track, being promoted to Professor of Pediatrics in 2006. Her clinical questions have been the driving force for her research. For the past 24 years Dr. Wagner has partnered with Dr. Bruce Hollis to conduct vitamin D research. They have completed three large, randomized control trials of vitamin D supplementation during pregnancy and an additional two pilot studies that served as the basis for a larger vitamin D supplementation randomized clinical trial involving lactating women and their infants. Dr. Wagner has a keen interest in maternal, neonatal and infant nutrition and its effects on health and participates in ongoing clinical trials to improve maternal and infant health.



**Zhiwei Ning, M.D., Ph.D.**

Dr. Zhiwei Ning, MD, PhD, is a renowned endocrinologist with over 30 years of experience, currently serving as Chief Physician at the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism, Beijing ChaoYang Hospital, Capital Medical University. His expertise lies in thyroid diseases, metabolic bone disorders, and vitamin D research, areas in which he has made significant contributions to both clinical practice and academic research. Dr. Ning earned his PhD in Endocrinology from Peking Union Medical College Hospital and completed his fellowship in Internal Medicine at Xi'an Jiaotong University, after receiving his medical degree from Hebei Medical University. Dr. Ning's professional experience is extensive, including a role as a visiting scholar at the University of California, San Francisco, and his long-standing position as Chief Physician at Beijing ChaoYang Hospital since 2003. His work has led to numerous publications, such as his research on MEN1 gene mutations and the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in China. Additionally, Dr. Ning has contributed chapters to medical textbooks, such as *The History of Vitamin D Research* and *Drug-Induced Osteoporosis*, reflecting his commitment to advancing knowledge in his field. Dr. Ning's research focuses on high-dose vitamin D therapy and genetic endocrine disorders. His work has significantly influenced the understanding and treatment of thyroid and bone diseases, particularly through the lens of vitamin D's role in these conditions. Widely respected in the medical community, Dr. Ning continues to be a leading figure in endocrinology, driving both innovative research and high standards of patient care.



**Aileen Burford-Mason Ph.D.**

Dr. Aileen Burford-Mason PhD is an immunologist, nutritionist and independent research analyst, healthcare writer and lecturer. She regularly talks to medical and allied health professionals and to the general public on nutritional research as applied to immunity, healthy aging, disease prevention, and stress. She received her undergraduate training in biochemistry at University College, Dublin, Ireland, and her Ph.D. in immunology at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. Formerly Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, she was Director of the Conacher Head and Neck Cancer Research Laboratory at The Toronto General Hospital. Her published research papers cover diverse fields, including nutrition, immunology, gastroenterology, microbiology, pathology, cancer, and AIDS. She currently divides her time between teaching and her private practice as an orthomolecular nutrition consultant. Dr. Burford-Mason has a long-standing interest in consumers' health issues, especially as they relate to the regulation of dietary supplements and has been actively involved in developing regulations governing nutritional supplements in Canada. She is the author of three best-selling books on nutrition and health – *Eat Well Age Better* (Dundurn Press), *The Healthy Brain* (HarperCollins Canada). Her most recent book is *The War against Viruses: How the Science of optimal nutrition can help you win* (HarperCollins Canada).



**Reinhold Vieth, Ph.D.**

Dr. Vieth is Professor Emeritus Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, whose expertise include clinical nutrition, pharmacology, biochemical markers of calcium, bone metabolism and osteoporosis. His work has included the role of vitamin D in health and well-being, and he has looked extensively at the safety and efficacy of Vitamin D. He is also interested in Vitamin D in the prevention of osteoporosis and cancer. He has served as an expert adviser on vitamin D related matters for the Institutes of Medicine, the Centers for Disease Control in Washington, the American Geriatric Society and Health Canada. He has been the principal investigator on many clinical trials involving vitamin D, ranging from osteoporosis to immune health.



**Richard Cheng, M.D., Ph.D.**  
**(Event Moderator)**

Dr. Richard Z. Cheng is a board-certified physician specializing in anti-aging and integrative cancer therapy, with practices in the United States and Shanghai. His approach combines orthomolecular, low carb, functional, and anti-aging medicine, emphasizing lifestyle and nutrition to optimize health and wellness. In 2022, Dr. Cheng was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the International Society for Orthomolecular Medicine for promoting nutritional immunity against Covid-19 globally. As co-founder of the Low Carb Medicine Alliance of China and Editor-in-Chief of the Orthomolecular Medicine News Service, he is an active public educator and international speaker, with numerous publications in academic journals and media on nutritional immunity and chronic disease prevention. Dr. Cheng trained at Shanghai Medical University, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the National Cancer Institute (NIH), and the American Academy of Anti-Aging & Regenerative Medicine. Dr. Cheng's interest in orthomolecular nutrition, including vitamin D, began 30 years ago. His nutrition-based integrative approach has saved lives, including critical Covid-19 cases, and reversed conditions such as coronary heart disease, autoimmune disorders, and cancer—diseases often considered incurable by conventional medicine. His research has led him to believe that most people are deficient in vitamin D, a vital factor in maintaining overall health.



**Jennifer Aliano, M.S., CCN**  
**(Event Moderator)**

Ms. Aliano has been working in the field of nutrition since 2004, with over 10 years of experience in the area of vitamin D research and education. She is currently the Executive Director of GrassrootsHealth, a non-profit public health promotion organization founded in 2007 by Carole Baggerly and supported by over 40 international senior vitamin D scientists, many of whom have dedicated their careers to vitamin D research. GrassrootsHealth has been running the world's largest public health intervention study – the D\*action field trial – to solve the vitamin D deficiency epidemic, and focuses on promoting optimal health worldwide through research, education, and advocacy, with a primary focus on the role of vitamin D. Jen began her career with GrassrootsHealth in 2012 and has co-authored several papers and resources published in collaboration with GrassrootsHealth and its panel of researchers and scientists. She played a key role in the “Protect Our Children NOW!” Quality Improvement project, implemented at the Medical University of South Carolina in 2015. Prior to working with GrassrootsHealth, Jen was founder and CEO of a resource educating individuals and practitioners on complementary aspects of healthy fertility, pregnancy, birth, and children. She graduated from the University of California, San Diego, studying psychology and pre-medicine in 2000.



## Additional Speakers and Ongoing Presentations to be Announced...

For more information:



To register for the live event:



Contact: [jen@grassrootshealth.org](mailto:jen@grassrootshealth.org)

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