



## THE FOOD AND NUTRITION NETWORK

### News from the chair

It is now more than a year ago since the Food and Nutrition Network at AU Health was established and while the conditions for activities among departments at Health and faculties at AU have not been optimal, we have actually established an active community with around 130 members now that are actively being addressed by external partners. For me, this clearly illustrates that we have addressed an unmet need at AU Health, and I invite you all to help us to grow momentum through 2021 in a world that I hope soon will allow us to meet and network again. Please start by marking the calendar for our 2021 annual meeting posted below and check [our website](#) for activities throughout the year.

---

### Annual meeting in 2021



The next annual meeting for the Food and Nutrition Network will be held on 19 May 2021. More information will follow soon. In the meantime, we suggest that you read about at the [network opening workshop](#) on 20 November 2019, where around 60 researchers from different departments, research units and hospital departments met to launch the Food and Nutrition Network.

*Figure: The steering committee's chair Niels Jessen and deputy chair Lene Baad-Hansen.*

---

### National Center for Obesity

In January 2020, the National Center for Obesity was established at Aarhus University Hospital. The center will collect and disseminate examples of best practice in treatment of obesity and is funded by the Ministry of Health. You can read more about the center here: <https://www.auh.dk/fagfolk/nationalt-center-for-overvagt/aktiviteter/>. The center is headed by professor [Jens Meldgaard Bruun](#), who is a member of the Food and Nutrition Network steering committee.

---

## Highlights from 2020 – food and nutrition research at AU Health

### January 2020

Associate professor [Mette Hansen](#) from Aarhus University received almost two million DKK from the Danish Dairy Research Foundation to investigate what effect skipping breakfast has on young women's weight and appetite regulation. [Read more about the research project](#) that also examines how the lack of breakfast affects the women's physical activity and ability to concentrate during the day.

Aarhus University Hospital was allocated 10 million DKK from the National Budget to establish the National Center for Obesity. [Read more about the center](#) (see also the preceding section).

Professor [Bente Nyvad](#) from the Department of Dentistry and Oral Health and colleagues showed in a [paper published in \*Journal of Oral Microbiology\*](#) that sweet soft drinks and a diet with lots of sugar increase the risk of both dental cavities and inflammation of the gums known as periodontal diseases.

### February 2020

Professor [Henning Grønbaek](#) from the Department of Hepatology and Gastroenterology, AUH received 5.6 million DKK from Arla Food for Health to investigate the effect of milk protein in a diet with a high protein content in patients with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. [Read more about the research project](#) that will produce new knowledge about treatments and dietary guidelines for patients suffering from this liver disease.

### March 2020

Associate professor [Gustavo Nascimento](#) from the Department of Dentistry and Oral Health was honored with an international Centennial Emerging Leader Award. [Read more about the reward](#) that he receives in recognition of his impressive research contribution within the dental, oral, and craniofacial field.

### April 2020

Associate professor [Alexander Wieck Fjældstad](#) from the Flavor Clinic and colleagues showed in a [paper published in \*Foods\*](#) that drinking of coffee affects our sense of taste, making us more sensitive to sweetness.

Clinical professor [Grethe Andersen](#) from the Department of Neurology, AUH received funding from the Lundbeck Foundation to investigate whether there is a correlation between acute neurological symptoms such as the loss of the sense of smell and COVID-19 infection. [Read more about the research project](#) that also examines whether the infection causes damage to the brain, spinal cord, and nerves.

### May 2020

PhD student [Pernille Jul Clemmensen](#) from Aarhus University received funding from Helsefonden to examine why Danish girls and, possibly, boys enter puberty earlier and earlier. [Read more about](#)

[the project](#), which aims at investigating whether the nitrate, which pregnant women consume via their diet and the drinking water, is part of the explanation.

Senior researcher [Morten Fenger-Grøn](#) from the Research Unit for General Practice and associate professor [Lars Frost](#) from the Department of Clinical Medicine showed in [paper published in \*Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine\*](#) that the risk of atrial fibrillation is not linked to the amount of body fat, but instead to large muscle mass, *i.e.* a high fat-free weight.

### November 2020

Fatigue is a burdensome symptom for patients with inflammatory bowel disease. In a recent [study published in \*Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics\*](#), senior researcher [Palle Bager](#) and colleagues from the Department of Hepatology and Gastroenterology, AUH showed a significant beneficial effect of high-dose oral vitamin B1 on chronic fatigue in these patients.

---

## Current funding opportunities for food and nutrition research

The Novo Nordisk Foundation has open calls within endocrinology and metabolism. Application deadline is 8 January 2021:

[Excellence Emerging Investigator Grant within Endocrinology and Metabolism – Nordic Region](#)  
[Ascending Investigator Grant within Endocrinology and Metabolism – Nordic Region Distinguished Investigator Grant within Endocrinology and Metabolism – Nordic Region](#)

---

## Upcoming events

May 19, 2021	Annual meeting for the Food and Nutrition Network
TBA, 2021	Site visits at research facilities within the network

---

## Have a healthy Christmas...



Check out AU Health's Advent calendar at LinkedIn about the Food and Nutrition Network (click the image).

Brilliant minds and excellent research facilities at Aarhus University have been applied to find the best solutions for Santa's health issues, and during the month of December, we will show you some of the ways AU Health can help Santa stay healthy.

---