



Obesity Research  
Institute

# Women's Health Webinar

MARCH 8, 2024

11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.



# Agenda

- 11:00-11:10 a.m.**      **Welcome**  
**Naima Moustaid-Moussa, Ph.D., FTOS, FAHA**, ORI Director  
Paul W. Horn Distinguished Professor, Department of Nutritional Sciences  
Associate President for Research, Office of Research & Innovation, TTU Lubbock  
**Jannette Dufour, Ph.D.**, ORI Associate Director  
University Distinguished Professor, Chair, Department of Cell Biology & Biochemistry, TTUHSC Lubbock
- 11:10-11:25 a.m.**      **Nutrition During Pregnancy – Christine Garner, Ph.D., RD, CLC** Assistant Vice President of Research, Assistant Professor, Principal Investigator for VIBRANT MOMS, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, InfantRisk Center, TTUHSC Amarillo  
  
Introduced by Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Nutritional Sciences, TTU Lubbock
- 11:25-11:40 a.m.**      **Thyroid Health and Women’s Well-being – Rama Chemitiganti, M.D.**, Director, Center of Excellence for Diabetes and Endocrinology, ECHD Endowed Chair, Department of Internal Medicine, TTUHSC Permian Basin  
  
Introduced by Alexis Rodriguez, Ph.D. Student, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry, TTUHSC Lubbock
- 11:40-12:00 p.m.**      **Q&A – Moderated by Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana Ph.D. Candidate & Alexis Rodriguez Ph.D. Student**
- 12:00-12:55 p.m.**      **Panelist dialog about Food and Nutrition Insecurity**  
**Moderator: Christine Garner, Ph.D., RD, CLC**  
  
**Panel:**  
**Wilna Oldewage-Theron, Ph.D., RD(SA)** Professor and Graduate Advisor of Nutritional Sciences in the College of Human Sciences at TTU Lubbock  
**Molly Forman, M.S.** North Region Program Leader, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
**Jessica Tullar Caroom, Ph.D.** Executive Director of Growing Together Texas in Lubbock  
**Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana, Ph.D. Candidate**, Nutritional Sciences and President of the Graduate Nutrition Organization for 2023-2024, TTU Lubbock
- 12:55-1:00 p.m.**      **Closing Remarks**  
**Naima Moustaid-Moussa, Ph.D., FTOS, FAHA**, ORI Director  
**Jannette Dufour, Ph.D.**, ORI Associate Director



**Dr. Naima Moustaid-Moussa, Ph.D., FTOS, FAHA  
ORI Director, Obesity Research Institute**

**Paul W. Horn Distinguished Professor, Nutritional Sciences  
Associate President of Research, Office of Research &  
Innovation, Texas Tech University Lubbock**

Prof. Naima Moustaid-Moussa was recruited to Texas Tech University (TTU) in 2012 as a tenured professor and senior strategic hire. She currently holds a Paul W. Horn Distinguished Professorship in Nutritional Sciences and serves as Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Obesity Research Institute at TTU.

She leads the Nutrigenomics, Inflammation and Obesity Research (NIOR) conducting basic and integrated nutrition and obesity research, with emphasis on the role of the endocrine function of adipose tissue (renin angiotensin system), heat shock proteins, and nutrient-gene interactions in metabolic diseases, breast cancer, aging and Alzheimer's disease. Current research focuses on bioactive compounds (including fish oil, tart cherry anthocyanins, curcumin, and other polyphenols) that reduce obesity-associated white fat inflammation, activate brown fat, reduce systemic and neuroinflammation and aging-related metabolic dysfunctions, using cells, rodents, and model organisms. Some of these projects include collaborations with US and international researchers.

Prof. Naima published over 180 peer reviewed papers from research funded by federal agencies (National Institutes of Health, NIH; and the United States Department of Agriculture, USDA), foundations (the American Heart Association, AHA; the American Diabetes Association, ADA) and international Foundations (Qatar National Research Funds) as well as industry (Empirical Foods, Inc). She served in several leadership positions within the American Society for Nutrition (ASN, as chair of the Nutrient-Gene Interactions Research Interest Section, member of the ASN Board of Directors, representing Experimental Nutrition (2020-22), The Obesity Society (TOS) as Council member), and the American Heart Association (AHA, as Lipids Basic Science peer review committee chair). She completed recently service (2016-2022) on the NIH Human Studies of Diabetes & Obesity study section), and is member of several scientific journal editorial boards including Scientific Reports (Nature Springer), J. Nutritional Biochemistry (Elsevier) & JAHA (Wiley).

Prof. Naima is Fellow of AHA (FAHA) and Fellow of TOS (FTOS). She received several awards sponsored by ASN (2012 Outstanding Investigator award, 2015 Pfizer Consumer Healthcare Nutritional Sciences award, 2020 Korean Nutrition Society Award). She was awarded mentoring and scholarship awards by TTU (2018 Nancy J Bell Outstanding Mentor Award, 2019 Outstanding Faculty Mentor for Undergraduate Research, 2020 Outstanding Researcher Award, the 2021 Bernie E. Rushing J. Distinguished Faculty Research Award in STEM, and the Paul W. Horn Distinguished Professorship, the highest honor and professorship at TTU. In 2023, she was awarded the COHS Wolfe International Scholars Award. She served for several years as the state of Texas as Region 1 representative on the statewide Live Smart Texas committee dedicated to obesity prevention and resources.

In 2022, Prof. Naima was appointed to the Board on Agriculture & Natural Resources (BANR) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine (NASEM). In 2023, Prof. Naima was elected Vice President Elect of the ASN and to the Board of Directors (2023-2027).

**Dr. Jannette M. Dufour**  
**Associate Director, Obesity Research Institute**  
**University Distinguished Professor, Chair, Department of**  
**Cell Biology & Biochemistry, Texas Tech University Health**  
**Sciences Center Lubbock**



Dr. Jannette M. Dufour is a University Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry in the School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Associate Director of the Obesity Research Institute.

She received her PhD in Genetics and Cell Biology from Washington State University in 1999 and trained as a postdoctoral fellow with the Islet transplantation Group in the Surgical Medical Research Institute, Department of Surgery at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, from 1999-2005. The focus of her research is to explore the therapeutic potential of immune-privileged Sertoli cells as a means to improve outcomes of transplantation. Specifically, her lab is testing the feasibility of using immune privileged Sertoli cells for cell-based gene therapy and examining the mechanism(s) of Sertoli cell immune protection to improve the survival of insulin-expressing cells as a treatment for diabetes. Her research has been funded by several national and local agencies, including the NIH, American Diabetes Association, and Texas ARP, and has been selected for the cover photo for Cell Transplantation (2008). Spermatogenesis (2012) and DNA and Cell Biology (2018) and highlighted in Biology of Reproduction (2014) and Nature Medicine (2018). She has been invited to give seminars at several universities as well as at national and international meetings, including the American Society for Reproductive Immunology (2022, 2024), American Society of Andrology (ASA; 2007, 2016, 2023), Society for the Study of Reproduction; 2012, 2016), NIAID (2017) and NIEHS (2017). She has received the TTUHSC President's Young Investigator Award (2011), the Outstanding Women Leader (OWL) Award from the West Texas Association for Women in Science (2013), the Harry M. Weitlauf Anatomy Teaching Award (2013), the Dean's Basic Science Teaching Award (2017) and the President's Team Teaching Award (2019, 2020), and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Dean's Teaching Award (2023).

# Presentation Moderators



## **Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana, Ph.D. Candidate**

Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana is a third-year Ph.D. Candidate pursuing Nutritional Sciences at Texas Tech University (TTU). She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences and a minor in Women and Gender Studies from Michigan State University.

Gasana is currently serving as the president of the graduate nutrition organization at TTU for the 2023-2024 academic year. Gasana is passionate about alleviating the effects of food insecurity, particularly among children and women. Before joining Texas Tech, Gasana served as a zero-hunger intern for the Congressional Hunger Center and CARE, USA, and in Rwanda's National Early Child Development program, an agency that fights against chronic malnutrition in Rwanda. Gasana's dissertation project is about assessing the effect of Harvest Lentil Vegetable Blend coupled with a theory-based nutrition education intervention in alleviating malnutrition among children 6-59 months in Northwest Kenya.

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## **Alexis Rodriguez, Ph.D. Student**

Alexis Rodriguez is currently a PhD student in the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Received her BSA in Biology at the University of Texas at Austin in 2020 and MS in Biotechnology from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in 2022. Her current research focuses on studying the immune privilege of Sertoli cells to improve the outcomes of allo- and xeno-transplantation.



Additionally, she is studying the mechanism by which transplanted Sertoli cells protect co-transplanted islet cells as a treatment for diabetes. Research interests include studying Sertoli cell immune privilege and immunoprotection of transplanted cells and examining the use of Sertoli cells to protect co-transplanted islet cells. Future research collaboration interests are transplantation, immune regulation, and diabetes.



# Presenters



## **Christine D. Garner, PhD, RD, CLC**

Christine D. Garner, PhD, RD, CLC is Assistant Vice President of Research, an Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and conducts research in the InfantRisk Center at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Amarillo, TX. She obtained both her Master's and Doctoral degrees in Nutrition at Cornell University, and she trained and worked as a Registered Dietitian in Pediatrics at the University of California San Francisco.

Dr. Garner's research focuses on maternal and child health with a nutrition lens during pregnancy, breastfeeding, infancy, and early childhood – the “first 1000 days.” She is currently leading an NIH-funded community-based research project to address maternal health disparities in the Texas Panhandle. Dr. Garner is experienced in human subjects research, including investigator-initiated trials, hospital-based interventions, qualitative (formative) research, survey research, and community-based interventions. She has worked with UNICEF, served on the board of the New York State Perinatal Association, and served as the Research Coordinator for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Women's Health Dietetics Practice Group. Christine is a mom & an active researcher, author, and editor on topics of nutrition, pregnancy, and women's health, including the online reference for clinical and medical professionals UpToDate®.

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# Presenters

## **Rama Chemitiganti, M.D.**

Doctor Rama Chemitiganti is the Director of the Center of Excellence for Diabetes and Endocrinology and ECHD Endowed Chair in the Department of Internal Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Odessa, Texas. He focuses on providing high-quality care in person and on improving access to the similar care to people residing in rural West Texas and Eastern New Mexico, by creating digital innovations. He is instrumental in setting up two free clinics in the Permian Basin. These clinics provide much-needed primary care and specialty care for diabetes and other hormonal disorders for persons without medical insurance. His research includes identifying mechanisms to prevent and delay diabetes and its dreaded complications. His current research examines racial and ethnic differences in treatment responses to novel anti-diabetes and anti-obesity medications. He is the principal investigator in a trial evaluating the use of Freehand 3D Tomographic Ultrasound Thyroid Imaging and Novel Neural Network Algorithms in the prognostication of Thyroid Nodules.



Dr. Chemitiganti has received multiple seed grants and two endowments to pursue his research and service mission. He serves in a leadership position at the Texas Endocrinology Association. Dr. Chemitiganti is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians (FACP) and a Fellow of the Endocrine Alliance Academy (FEAA). His scholarship and teaching were recognized through several awards, including the "Dean's Distinguished Faculty Service Award," more recently, he was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society (ΑΩΑ).

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# Panel Discussion

## Food and Nutrition Insecurity



**Moderator: Christine D. Garner, PhD, RD, CLC**

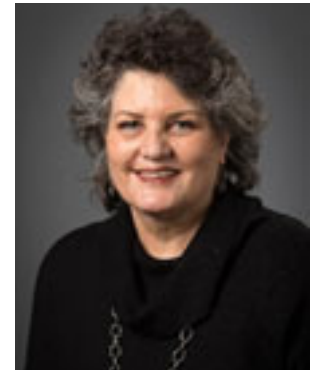
Assistant Vice President of Research, Assistant Professor, Principal Investigator for VIBRANT MOMS, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, InfantRisk Center, TTUHSC Amarillo

**Panelist: Wilna Oldewage-Theron, Ph.D. RD(SA)**

Dr. Wilna Oldewage-Theron, PhD RD(SA), is a Professor of Nutritional Sciences and a Graduate Advisor in the College of Human Sciences at Texas Tech University (TTU). She has over twenty years of community nutrition research experience in Africa and is a National Research Foundation (NRF)-rated researcher in South Africa (SA). Before joining TTU, she was the Director of the institutional research Center of Sustainable Livelihoods at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in SA, where her research focused on the factors contributing to household food insecurity and malnutrition in resource-poor communities.

During her tenure at VUT she investigated the effect of various community nutrition interventions food insecurity and malnutrition in resource-poor communities. During her tenure at VUT she investigated the effect of various community nutrition interventions (e.g., food fortification, supplementation, nutrition education, home gardening, school nutrition programs) on food insecurity, dietary diversity, nutritional status, and metabolic health of vulnerable groups (women, children, and seniors).

Her community research and development program at present is focused on the double burden of malnutrition among women, children, and seniors, specifically on how soy production, processing, and consumption can contribute to human health and food security among resource-poor communities in SA. During 2016, 2017, and 2018, she was a consultant for the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH), facilitating a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cochran workshop on school nutrition programs for delegates from various African and South American countries. She was invited to conduct impact evaluations for community food and nutrition projects implemented and funded by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (2014-2016), Nestle (2014-2016), and Joint Aid Management (2005-2008) in SA, as well as in the larger Africa for Potatoes USA (2010-2012) and WISHH (2008-2018). She was recently invited to lead a nutrition education program implemented for a non-profit organization, namely Let Hope Begin Here in Guatemala during January 2024. Dr Oldewage-Theron has served as President for the African Nutrition Society (ASN) of which she was a founding member, and the South African Association of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences (SAAFECS), and currently serves as a member of the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA).





# Panelists



## **Molly Forman, M.S.**

Molly Forman is serving as the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension FCH Regional Program Leader for the North Region. She provides leadership for Family and Community Health programs with youth and adult audiences in the 42 North Region Counties surrounding Amarillo and Lubbock. She holds a B.S. in Family and Consumer Science from Texas Tech University, an M.S. in Agriculture Education from Texas Tech University, and is currently working on her Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from West Texas A&M University. Ms. Forman

has been a part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service team since 2009. Prior to her appointment as North Region FCH Program Leader in February 2022, she served as an FCS agent in Briscoe and Hall counties.

Forman has implemented health and wellness education, including the Better Living for Texans educational series, Learn, Grow, Eat, Go!, food handlers certification, agricultural literacy programs, financial literacy, Shattered Dreams, Ag Day, and the 4-H Food and Nutrition Project.

She has been awarded two Superior Service Awards and two Vice Chancellor's Awards of Excellence in recognition of her programmatic efforts involving health and wellness. These programs addressed the needs of residents across a wide range of ages and backgrounds.

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# Panelists



## **Jessica Tullar Caroom, Ph.D.**

Jessica Tullar Caroom, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of Growing Together Texas in Lubbock. Prior to founding Growing Together Texas, Dr. Caroom was faculty at the UT Health Science Center, leading a population health research team for twelve years. In 2016, she spearheaded a group of parents and teachers to install gardens at her children's school, Christ the King. She ran the garden program classes and led volunteers for four years. In 2017, she was asked to chair the South Plains Hunger Solutions Coalition's Hunger

and Horticulture Action Team to connect small-scale growing projects to address hunger issues. In the spring of 2020, she launched Growing Together Texas. She has fundraised to provide further support for those gardens by providing resources (mulch, compost, seeds, soil, plants, etc.) to community growers to lower the barriers for school and community gardens.

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## **Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana, Ph.D. Candidate** Nutritional Sciences at Texas Tech University, Lubbock



# Resources



## **Lubbock Dream Center:**

Lubbock Resource Pocket Pal is a list of local recourses and referrals for the Lubbock community. You can find local businesses and organizations that help with providing shelter, treatment centers, clothing, food pantries/vouchers/hot meals, medical & dental help, rent & utility assistance, and more.

## **Lbk Community - Health Department:**

LBK Community is a network of health and social providers that aims to connect community members with health and social services promptly through the use of Unite Us, a secure, web-based platform. The network also strives to improve the coordination and collaboration of services between Community-Based and non-Community-Based Organizations to avoid duplicating efforts and identify gaps in services. Since its launch in June 2020, the network has made over 450 referrals, identified over 800 needs, and helped over 500 individuals.



## **Lubbock Impact Inc.:**

Empower the working poor by providing enrichment programs and resources to meet physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. This provides the hope and tools to break generational poverty and build a stronger future.

## **Raider Red's Food Pantry:**

Raider Red's Food Pantry provides supplemental non-perishable food and hygiene items to students who may face hardships and is designed to complement other resources available. Students experiencing long-term hardships are encouraged to contact the Raider Relief - Advocacy & Resource Center (RRARC) for additional assistance.



Women Full Professors Network - Membership is open to all full professors regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender identification, or sexual orientation. More information regarding membership will be forthcoming from the Office of the Provost.

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# Acknowledgements

## A Special Thank You to:

### Our Webinar Presenters:

Dr. Christine D. Garner  
Dr. Rama Chemitiganti

### Presentation Moderators:

Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana & Alexis Rodriguez

### Our Panel:

Molly Forman  
Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana  
Wilna Oldewage-Theron  
Jessica Tullar Caroom

### Panel Moderator:

Dr. Christine D. Garner

### Organizing Committee:

Dr. Naima Moustaid-Moussa  
Dr. Jannette Dufour  
Alex Scoggin  
Dr. aretha marbley  
Dr. Lisa Garner  
Elyvine Ingabire-Gasana  
Alexis Rodriguez  
Crystal Price  
OR&I, ORDC, COHS, and CBB

## POST-MEETING SURVEY for 2024 ORI Women's Health Webinar

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# Obesity Research Institute 9th Annual Meeting One Health for Metabolic Health **CALL FOR ABSTRACTS** **DUE MARCH 29 by 5:00 PM**

Undergraduate/Graduate Students & Postdocs  
broadly working in obesity and related metabolic or  
chronic diseases are encouraged to submit!

## Abstract Submission Form Details

Click here or scan QR Code to submit your abstract



On the submission form, please include:

- Title of research presentation
- Authors' names & affiliations (first author will be the presenter)
- Objective, methods, results, significance, and conclusions (250-word limit)

Monetary awards will be given to top overall presentations.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**ORI ANNUAL MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 1ST**  
**10:00 AM - 5:00 PM**  
**TTUHSC LUBBOCK**



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