

CUILIN ZHANG Ph.D., M.P.H., M.D.

A. CURRENT POSITION

Investigator (Tenure-track)
Epidemiology Branch, Division of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Preventive Research
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Institutes of Health

B. ADDRESS

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C. EDUCATION

M.D.	Preventive Medicine, Beijing Medical University	July, 1993
M.P.H.	Epidemiology, University of Washington	December, 1999
Ph.D.	Epidemiology, University of Washington	December, 2003

D. PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

1994-1997 Faculty Member, Health Science Center, Peking University
2006-2007 Research Scientist, School of Public Health, Harvard University
2007-present Investigator (tenure track), Division of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Prevention Research, NICHD/National Institutes of Health

E. RESEARCH INTEREST

Cuilin Zhang Ph.D., M.D., M.P.H., is a tenure-track investigator of the Division of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Prevention Research, Eunice Kennedy Shrive National Institute of Child and Human Development, National Institutes of Health (NIH) of U.S. Before coming to NIH, Dr. Zhang was a Nutritional and Genetic Epidemiologist at School of Public Health, Harvard University. Dr. Zhang's work has focused on both the etiological and preventive aspects of diabetes and related metabolic disorders. Dr. Zhang's research interest is at the interface of genetic and non-genetic biological markers and potentially modifiable exogenous factors, focusing on their interplay in relation to the development of complex diseases. More specifically, her current research activities focus primarily on the roles of genetic and diet and lifestyle determinants and the interaction of them in the pathogenesis of gestational diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Dr. Zhang also has long-standing research interests in studies of fetal origins of chronic diseases, and modifications of diet and lifestyle to improve pregnancy outcomes and child health. Dr. Zhang is currently the principal investigator for multiple studies supported by NIH, such as a longitudinal study of the etiology of gestational diabetes and a large retrospective cohort study of diabetes risk across women's lifespan.

ABSTRACT

Impact of dietary factors on the risk of gestational diabetes: Review focusing on epidemiologic evidence

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Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), a common pregnancy complication, is a growing health concern. GDM has been related to substantial long-term adverse health outcomes for both mother and baby, including elevated risk for obesity, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disorders, and diabetes. Moreover, accumulating evidence from in vivo and animal studies demonstrated that maternal hyperglycemia impairs embryogenesis as early as the pre-implantation stages of development. Collectively, these data underscore the significance of understanding risk factors for GDM and preventing GDM among high risk populations. This lecture will review epidemiological evidence on emerging novel modifiable risk factors that may contribute to the early prevention of GDM; in particular dietary factors that may be related to elevated GDM risk. The lecture will also raise major methodological concerns on available epidemiological studies of GDM risk factors. Pregnant women, or women planning pregnancy, are generally highly motivated to follow advice to improve the outcome of pregnancy, and hence pregnancy represents an ideal time in life to advocate for a healthy lifestyle.