

The ODS Update

A Newsletter for Health Professionals



National Institutes of Health
Office of Dietary Supplements

Summer 2018

Director Coates Retires; Betz to Serve as Interim Director



Dr. Paul M. Coates will retire on June 22 as Director of the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), where he served for 19 years in that position. He came to ODS—then a 4-year old office—after a 20-year academic career as a human geneticist and 6 years at NIH where he was introduced to the field of nutrition and the translation of research into policy.

Paul reflects that being the Director of ODS was “an opportunity that was enormously gratifying.” During his tenure, the budget of the office grew more than five-fold, and his staff initiated and developed robust programs in stimulating and supporting research on dietary supplements, developing resources and tools to enhance the quality of this research, growing and training the dietary supplement research workforce, and translating research findings into useful information and advice for consumers, health professionals, and policymakers.

Under Paul’s leadership, ODS has become known around the world as a place where the rigorous scientific investigation of dietary supplements is encouraged and supported, and where trustworthy advice about these ingredients and products can be obtained. As Paul often has said, “At the end of the day, consumers deserve access to reliable, evidence-based information on dietary supplements.”

Reflecting on his time at ODS, Paul said, “ODS has grown substantially in size, in budget, and in impact over the years, and it’s been a privilege to be part of that growth.” He continued, “I’ve had the pleasure of working with truly talented and dedicated people; I hope they have enjoyed it as much as I have.”

Dr. Joseph M. Betz, who has been the Director of the ODS Analytical Methods and Reference Materials Program (AMRM) since its inception in 2002, will serve as the interim director of ODS. Speaking on behalf of the ODS staff, Joe expressed his thanks to Paul for his leadership, saying, “It has been our privilege to have worked with you over these many years; we wish you a happy and healthy retirement with your family and many friends.” To learn more about Joe, see his [biography on the ODS website](#).



News You Can Use

New ODS Dietary Supplement Fact Sheets

ODS continues to expand its library of information resources with new fact sheets on [potassium](#) and [pantothenic acid](#) for both health professionals and consumers, and a health professional fact sheet on [dietary supplements for primary mitochondrial disorders](#).



Funding Opportunities

- Administrative Supplements for Validation Studies of Analytical Methods for Dietary Supplements and Natural Products (Admin Supp): [PA-18-818](#)
- Administrative Supplements for Research on Dietary Supplements (Admin Supp) to provide supplemental funding for investigating the role of dietary supplements and/or their ingredients in health maintenance and disease prevention: [PA-18-817](#)

ODS Seminar Series

Throughout the academic year, ODS hosts seminars by scientists who conduct research on dietary supplements and related issues. The seminars take place monthly from 11 a.m. to noon in the ground floor conference room of 6100 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, MD. The 2018-2019 [seminar series](#) begins on September 26, 2018. Contact ODS to receive seminar announcements and information for viewing via webinar at ODS@nih.gov.

Have a question? [Ask ODS](#)

ODS provides general information about dietary supplement ingredients in response to questions it receives from consumers, health professionals, students, and others. While we cannot answer specific medical questions, make referrals, or give personal guidance on the use of dietary supplements, registered dietitians from ODS personally reply to each inquiry and give useful, scientific, and evidence-based information.



ODS Staff News

Adam J. Kuszak, Ph.D., has been named Director of the ODS AMRM program. Adam, who is a Health Scientist Administrator, came to ODS in 2014 as an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellow. Learn more about Adam on the [ODS website](#).



LaVerne L. Brown, Ph.D., was named Health Scientist Administrator at ODS in April 2018. LaVerne joined ODS as an AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow in 2016. She is developing a program that will encourage researchers to identify more opportunities to study “resilient” special populations—such as active duty military, veterans, centenarians—those that are typically under-represented in scientific investigations. Learn more about LaVerne on the [ODS website](#).

Michelle Gibson joined ODS as a Program Specialist in April 2018. Michelle has 17 years of experience in providing program and project management for the federal government, both as a federal employee and as a contractor. She has a passion for program planning, office and contract management, travel, and purchasing. Michelle is excited to have joined ODS and has already begun to explore new adventures. Learn more about Michelle on the [ODS website](#).





Christopher T. Sempos, Ph.D., has left ODS to continue his work as the coordinator of the Vitamin D Standardization Program (VDSP), which was an ODS program for many years and is now independent. Chris also chairs a working group of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry that will work to revise VDSP performance criteria for standardizing the measurement of 25-hydroxyvitamin D—the measure of vitamin D status. A nutritional epidemiologist, Chris is the author/co-author of more than 200 scientific papers and the textbook, “Statistical Methods in Epidemiology.” He served as a scientific consultant at ODS for 3 years after his retirement, following more than 27 years of federal government service, including 9 years at ODS.

Christine Lewis Taylor, Ph.D., retired from ODS in March 2018. Christine was a scientific consultant to ODS since 2011. Her responsibilities focused on the organization of activities to identify a scientific basis for use of biomarkers to assess nutritional status risk, to clarify the application of nutritional requirements, and to outline the use of systematic evidence-based reviews to address nutrition issues.



Luisa Rios-Avila, Ph.D., has left ODS for her new life in Seattle after almost 3 years as a nutrition scientist consultant at ODS. She was the director of the 2018 Mary Frances Picciano Dietary Supplement Research Practicum. In addition, Luisa supported the ODS Nutrition and Dietary Supplement Interventions for Inborn Errors of Metabolism Program for which she developed the [fact sheet for health professionals](#) on dietary supplement use in the management of primary mitochondrial disorders, among other activities.

Linda D. Meyers, Ph.D., will retire on June 30, 2018 from ODS, where she has been a scientific consultant since March 2016. Her work has focused on organizing activities to advance the development and application of evidence-based nutritional requirements known as Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs).



Recent ODS Staff Publications

ODS staff members have published papers that address key issues in dietary supplement and related research. Several of the most recent publications are highlighted below. For a complete list, see the ODS website: [Staff Publications](#).

Brown LL, Cohen B, Tabor D, Zappal G, Maruvada P, Coates PM. [The vitamin D paradox in Black Americans: a systems-based approach to investigating clinical practice, research, and public health—expert panel meeting report.](#) BMC Proc. 2018;12:6. doi: 10.1186/s12919-018-0102-4.

Shipkowski KA, **Betz JM**, Birnbaum LS, Bucher JR, **Coates PM**, Hopp DC, MacKay D, Oketch-Rabah H, Walker NJ, Welch C, Rider CV. [Naturally complex: perspectives and challenges associated with Botanical Dietary Supplement Safety assessment.](#) Food Chem Toxicol. 2018 Apr 4. pii: S0278-6915(18)30209-6. doi: 10.1016/j.fct.2018.04.007. [Epub ahead of print].

Gupta PM, Gahche JJ, Herrick KA, **Ershow AG, Potischman N**, Perrine CG. [Use of iodine-containing dietary supplements remains low among women of reproductive age in the United States: NHANES 2011–2014.](#) Nutrients 2018;10(4). pii: E422. doi: 10.3390/nu10040422.

Huang H, **Davis CD**, Wang TTY. [Extensive degradation and low bioavailability of orally consumed corn miRNAs in mice.](#) Nutrients. 2018 Feb 15;10(2). pii: E215. doi: 10.3390/nu10020215.

Ershow AG, Skeaff SA, **Merkel JM**, Pehrsson PR. [Development of databases on iodine in foods and dietary supplements.](#) Nutrients. 2018 Jan 17;10(1). pii: E100. doi: 10.3390/nu10010100.

ODS Dietary Supplement Resources Featured in National Media

Two ODS dietary supplement fact sheets—[Dietary Supplements for Exercise and Athletic Performance](#) and [Dietary Supplements for Weight Loss](#)—were introduced in an [NIH news release titled, *Will supplements help your workout or diet routine?*](#) This announcement was covered by several media outlets, including The Washington Post, Health.com, Time.com, and NutraIngredients-USA.com.



ODS Update provides information on news, activities, and resources from the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS). ODS is a program office within the Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The mission of ODS is to strengthen knowledge and understanding of dietary supplements by evaluating scientific information, stimulating and supporting research, disseminating research results, and educating the public to foster an enhanced quality of life and health for the U.S. population.

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About ODS

The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the principal biomedical and behavioral research agency of the United States Government. NIH is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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