Barbara Stefanska, PhD, MPH
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"Epigenetic aberrations in cancer and dietary influences on the epigenome"

Biosketch

Dr. Barbara Stefanska is an Assistant Professor in Food, Nutrition and Health Program in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at The University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, Canada. She has joined UBC in July 2017 from Purdue University where she was part of the Department of Nutrition Science. Her area of expertise is nutritional epigenomics and cancer epigenetics.

Dr. Stefanska completed a Master's in Public Health and a PhD in nutritional epigenomics at Medical University of Lodz, Poland followed by a postdoctoral training in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. During her doctoral and postdoctoral studies, Dr. Stefanska explored epigenetic effects of bioactive food components in cancer prevention and support of chemotherapy, and was the first who established the patterns of DNA methylation and gene expression in liver cancer patients and a functional role of differential DNA methylation between tumor and normal tissue.

Epigenetic modifications play a significant role in normal development and genome stability and constitute a mechanism of genome adaptation to external stimuli. Dr. Stefanska's laboratory current research interest is to study how the environment (e.g., diet) impacts cell biology through epigenetic mechanisms. As part of the exposome research, the Stefanska Lab focuses on the functional roles of epigenetic enzymes and chromatin-modifying proteins in the effects on cell biology exerted by dietary polyphenols with different chemical structures. The Stefanska Lab has recently provided the first evidence on mechanisms involved in epigenetic effects of stilbenoid polyphenols in a comprehensive omics study of abnormal human mammary epithelial cells.

Apart from research and teaching, Dr. Stefanska acts as Senior Editor in Cancer Pharmacology in the British Journal of Pharmacology that is a top international pharmacology journal (ranked 10th out of 297 journals in the category "Pharmacology").