

Dr. Kyly Whitfield is Assistant Professor at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU). She is passionate about nutrition in the first 1,000 days, from conception to two years, and her research program aims to explore both the 'what' and 'how' of feeding during this time. Dr. Whitfield has two main areas of research. With the first, she focuses on identifying culturally appropriate public health interventions to combat micronutrient deficiencies in low resource settings. Currently this includes the exploration of fortification to address thiamine deficiency among breast-fed infants in Southeast Asia. The second area is Canadian-based and explores responsive infant feeding. Here, she is interested in understanding the effects of caregiver and infant feeding behaviours on eating patterns and disease risk later in life.

Many regions in Asia and Pacific islands have reported infantile beriberi that presents public health concerns in some countries such as Cambodia. The main reason for this problem is the staple food, namely rice, known to be poor in thiamine. Inadequate thiamine intake in these regions results in low level of thiamine in the maternal milk that leads to infant mortality. Dr. Whitfield has developed a fish sauce fortified with thiamine and provided the evidence through the clinical trial that the consumption of rice with fortified sauce effectively prevents thiamine deficiency in lactating mothers and infants. Currently, Dr. Whitfield is exploring the role of other culturally appropriate food vehicles in Cambodia.

Dr. Whitfield is a young scientist and faculty member who has developed her research program in a short period of time. She has achieved an exceptional level of research grants (~2M) during her less than four years as a member of the MSVU faculty which is a small university with a heavy undergraduate teaching workload. Her research is strongly related to the mandate of INMD. She is an active member of CNS, serving on both the Trainee Leadership Committee and the Education committee. She has spoken at and moderated many CNS webinars.