

Diet Quality Scoring Adapted for “Level Playing Field” Across Multicultural Patterns

ACS ensures fair and accurate diet quality measurement by adapting the widely-used Healthy Eating Index (HEI) to diverse dietary patterns.

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, October 15, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Diet ID™](#), a subsidiary of food-as-medicine company, [Tangelo](#), has extended its innovations in the dietary measurement and management space with the introduction of Adaptive Component Scoring (ACS), a new methodology designed to provide a more accurate and inclusive measure of diet quality in multicultural populations.

ACS adapts the widely-used Healthy Eating Index (HEI) to accommodate diverse dietary patterns found in multicultural populations, preserving the integrity of the original HEI scoring system while allowing for parity in scoring across patterns that include, or exclude, select food groups.



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While there are alternatives to the robustly validated HEI, and some accommodate food group exclusions, none until now has been adaptive, responding to variation in dietary components.

The Healthy Eating Index (HEI) is one of the most robust tools for evaluating diet quality in the U.S. and has been linked to significant health outcomes, including chronic disease risk, longevity, and overall mortality. As measured with the HEI, diet quality is the single leading predictor of

both premature mortality and chronic morbidity in the United States today.

However, because the HEI is closely aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, it does not always reflect the cultural and nutritional diversity of modern dietary practices.

Diets that exclude discretionary food groups such as dairy or grains—common in many traditional Asian, vegan, and Paleo diets—can receive lower HEI scores, even when those diets are nutrient-dense, time-honored, and associated with optimal health outcomes. As an example, among the world's famously vital and long-lived Blue Zones populations is Okinawa, Japan, with a dietary pattern that traditionally omits dairy.

ACS provides a more inclusive solution by adjusting the HEI to fairly score dietary patterns that omit certain food groups without penalizing those choices. ACS adjusts for the exclusion of discretionary food groups, ensuring that diet quality scores reflect the true nutritional value of diverse diets.

"ACS respects the validity and integrity of the HEI, and also respects the importance of accommodating multicultural populations in our efforts to measure and manage diet quality," says Dr. David Katz, CEO of Diet ID and Chief Medical Officer for Tangelo. "ACS ensures that people receive full credit for high-quality diets, whether or not they include certain discretionary foods like dairy or grains."

Adaptive Component Scoring modifies the HEI by adjusting its scoring based on whether certain food groups are part of a dietary pattern. For instance, in traditional East Asian diets where dairy is rarely consumed, ACS adapts the HEI algorithm to exclude dairy from the calculation without lowering the overall diet quality score.

The same principle applies to other diets that exclude grains, such as some variations of Paleo and low-carb diets. By doing so, ACS maintains a fair and standardized way to measure diet quality across a wide range of cultural and dietary practices.

This new scoring method is particularly relevant for nutrition research and food-as-medicine initiatives, where standardized metrics are critical for measuring diet quality accurately. ACS empowers healthcare providers, researchers, and public health programs to assess and promote diverse dietary patterns without bias, fostering greater inclusivity within the food-as-medicine movement.

According to Christopher Gardner, PhD, director of nutrition studies at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, and member of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, "Nutrition research and dietary guidance have historically tended toward ethnocentrism, giving limited attention to the importance of cultural diversity in dietary preferences and practices. The ACS innovation should prove a very useful tool in both contexts, with potentially important implications for diet-related health outcomes in

multicultural populations."

With the introduction of Adaptive Component Scoring, Diet ID continues to advance diet quality assessment, ensuring that multicultural populations are represented fairly. ACS is patent pending, and a manuscript introducing the methods in detail is currently under peer review.

About Diet ID

Diet ID is a leader in digital diet assessment and behavior change, offering innovative tools to measure diet quality and provide personalized nutrition guidance. Through a patented diet quality assessment and a suite of behavior change solutions, Diet ID empowers individuals, businesses, and healthcare providers to improve dietary outcomes and overall health.

About Tangelo

Tangelo is a full-stack Food as Medicine platform that delivers precision Food As Medicine interventions and wrap-around services to populations at scale. Focused on building the data infrastructure (or "railroad") to make prescribing food a standard of care, Tangelo plugs-in stakeholders — including health care payers, food suppliers, nutrition experts, policymakers, and more — to a new supply-chain focused on healing our country through nutrition and ending diet-related chronic disease.

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