

# Measuring What Matters: A Novel Approach to Diet Quality Assessment for Everyone

*New Paper Published in Frontiers in Nutrition details Diet ID's Smarter, More Accurate Way to Measure Diet Quality Across Cultures*

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, February 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Diet ID™](#), a subsidiary of [Tangelo](#), the diet quality improvement platform, is proud to announce the publication of a newly released research report in [Frontiers in Nutrition](#) that advances equitable diet quality assessment.



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*Dr. David L. Katz, MD, MPH*

The report introduces Adaptive Component Scoring (ACS), a methodology that enhances the widely used Healthy Eating Index (HEI) to fairly assess diet quality across diverse cultural dietary patterns.

The paper, titled "Application of the Healthy Eating Index in a Multicultural Population: Introduction of Adaptive Component Scoring," presents a novel approach to

ensuring that diet quality assessments accurately reflect the nutritional value of various eating patterns without penalizing dietary traditions that omit certain food groups.

This advancement is a critical step in making diet quality measurement more inclusive, particularly for multicultural populations whose traditional diets may not align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, even if they are high in quality.

“ACS upholds the scientific foundation of the HEI while making it more inclusive, ensuring that individuals are fairly assessed for the quality of their diets, regardless of whether they include certain discretionary food groups like dairy or grains,” said Dr. David Katz, CEO of Diet ID and Chief Medical Officer of Tangelo.

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The Healthy Eating Index is one of the most robust tools for evaluating diet quality in the U.S., strongly correlated with chronic disease risk, longevity, and overall mortality. However, because it is closely tied to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the HEI does not always accommodate cultural and nutritional diversity.

Many traditional diets—such as certain Asian, Mediterranean, plant-based, and ancestral diets—exclude discretionary food groups like dairy or grains. Under the standard HEI framework, these exclusions can result in artificially lower scores, even when the diets are rich in nutrients and linked to positive health outcomes. For example, the traditional diet of Okinawa, Japan—one of the world’s famed Blue Zones, known for longevity—excludes dairy but is still considered one of the healthiest eating patterns globally.



ACS modifies the HEI scoring system by adjusting for the exclusion of discretionary food groups, ensuring that diet quality scores fairly reflect the overall nutritional value of a given diet. For example, in traditional East Asian diets where dairy is rarely consumed, ACS adjusts the HEI calculation to exclude dairy without penalizing the overall diet quality score. Similarly, for diets that omit grains—such as some variations of Paleo and low-carb diets—ACS ensures that nutrient-dense food choices are accurately reflected in the final score.

This innovative scoring method preserves the scientific rigor of HEI while allowing for a more equitable assessment of dietary patterns across populations with diverse cultural backgrounds.

ACS has significant implications for nutrition science, public health, and clinical practice. Standardized diet quality metrics are critical in research and healthcare, particularly for food-as-medicine programs that aim to prescribe and measure the impact of dietary interventions.

“For too long, nutrition research and dietary recommendations have overlooked the cultural diversity in eating habits, often favoring a one-size-fits-all approach,” said 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. “The ACS innovation should prove a very useful tool in both contexts, with potentially important implications for diet-related health outcomes in multicultural populations.”

By ensuring a fair and representative measure of diet quality, ACS empowers healthcare providers, researchers, and policymakers to better assess and support diverse dietary patterns without bias. This aligns with the growing recognition that dietary recommendations must respect cultural traditions while promoting optimal health outcomes.

With the publication of this report, Diet ID and Tangelo continue their mission to advance the field of diet quality measurement, ensuring that multicultural populations are represented fairly in dietary assessments. ACS is patent pending, and its integration into digital dietary assessment tools will enable broader adoption across research and clinical settings.

### 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 the leading diet quality improvement platform that optimizes food as medicine outcomes and enables people to live healthier lives. Our advanced product suite enables health plans, providers, and government agencies to measure diet quality as a vital sign, provide precision nutrition interventions, and drive positive health outcomes through food as medicine programs. The first of its kind, our patented diet quality assessment, Diet ID, empowers individuals, businesses, and healthcare providers to improve dietary outcomes and overall health.

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