

# The Myositis Association Selected for NIH NOURISH Autoimmunity Challenge

*TMA's innovative, nutrition-focused research proposal is one of 15 projects selected in crowd-sourced search for ideas to reduce autoimmune disease burden.*

COLUMBIA, MD, UNITED STATES, March 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Myositis Association](#) (TMA) proudly announces that its proposal, Dietary Interventions in Dermatomyositis: Autoimmune Protocol vs.

Mediterranean Diet, has been selected as a winning concept in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [NOURISH Autoimmunity Challenge](#), a national competition designed to spark bold, community driven ideas that integrate nutrition into autoimmune disease research.



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*Linda Kobert, TMA Research & Communications Specialist*

The NOURISH Challenge, led by the NIH Office of Autoimmune Disease Research, invited innovative concepts that explore how diet influences autoimmune disease onset, progression, and symptom management. Winning ideas were chosen for their scientific rigor, feasibility, innovation, and meaningful engagement with patient communities.

TMA's proposal introduces a first of its kind comparative study evaluating two dietary strategies—the Mediterranean diet and the Autoimmune Protocol (AIP)—to determine their impact on inflammation, immune regulation, and quality of life in people living with

dermatomyositis (DM). DM is a rare autoimmune disease marked by severe muscle weakness, debilitating fatigue, and painful skin rashes. As the proposal notes, “Dermatomyositis...is a serious condition that can cause significant morbidity and mortality...[and] there is an urgent need for adjunctive strategies that are safe, accessible, and patient-centered.”

## A Groundbreaking Approach to Nutrition in Autoimmune Disease

The selected concept outlines a 12 week randomized dietary intervention comparing:

- The Mediterranean diet, a well studied anti inflammatory eating pattern rich in olive oil, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and fish.
- The Autoimmune Protocol (AIP), a structured elimination and reintroduction diet designed to identify individual food triggers and reduce immune activation.

Both diets emphasize nutrient density, gut-immune interactions, and reduction of pro inflammatory foods. As described in the proposal, "Nutrition is a modifiable factor that may influence systemic and tissue-specific inflammation, immune signaling, and symptom burden."

The study incorporates validated clinical endpoints—including the Total Improvement Score (TIS) and the Cutaneous Dermatomyositis Disease Area and Severity Index (CDASI)—alongside patient reported outcomes, biomarker analysis, gut health assessments, and detailed dietary tracking. This comprehensive design elevates nutrition research to the rigor of therapeutic trials.

## A Community Driven, Interdisciplinary Effort

TMA's submission reflects deep collaboration among clinicians, researchers, registered dietitians, and individuals living with dermatomyositis. "The proposal was created through extensive engagement with TMA's patient and medical communities, ensuring that the voices of those living with myositis are central to this initiative," says Linda Kobert, TMA Research & Communications Specialist.

We applaud our interdisciplinary team, which includes:

- Linda Kobert, MSN, MFA, Research & Communications Specialist, TMA
- Lisa Christopher Stine, MD, MS, Director, Johns Hopkins Myositis Center
- Latika Gupta, MD, rheumatologist and nutrition researcher
- Kim Murray, RD, LDN, registered dietitian and autoimmune nutrition specialist
- Dorothy Vetrano, dermatomyositis patient advocate and writer

## Potential to Transform Autoimmune Disease Research

TMA's concept offers a scalable model for precision nutrition across autoimmune diseases. By comparing a population validated anti inflammatory diet with a personalized elimination—reintroduction approach, the study could illuminate new pathways for symptom management and improved quality of life.

Findings could inform clinical guidelines, expanding treatment options to include nonpharmacologic interventions with no side effects and empower individuals with DM to choose this treatment option on their own.

## About The Myositis Association

The Myositis Association is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by myositis through support, education, advocacy, and research. TMA connects patients, caregivers, clinicians, and researchers to advance understanding and treatment of these rare autoimmune diseases.

For more information, please visit The Myositis Association at <https://www.myositis.org/>.

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