

# SAJEEVIKA SAUMALI DAUNDASEKARA

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Faculty of Agriculture  
University of Peradeniya



## Skills Summary

Highly self-motivated lecturer and a researcher with demonstrated research expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research related to food science, nutrition, obesity, food insecurity, and social determinants of health and nutrition.

## Education

Ph.D. in Kinesiology (Obesity Studies) University of Houston, TX, USA.	May 2018
M.Sc. in Food and Nutrition University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.	August 2014
B.Sc. (Honors) in Food Science and Technology University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.	October 2012

## Experience

### **University of Peradeniya**

*Senior Lecturer (Grade II)* 2021-present  
*Department of Food Science and Technology*  
*Faculty of Agriculture*

### **University of Texas Health Science Center**

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow* 2020-2021  
*Department of Research*  
*Cizik School of Nursing*

### **University of Houston**

*Postdoctoral Fellow* 2018-2020  
*Department of Health & Human Performances*

## **University of Houston**

Instructional Assistant

2014-2018

Department of Health & Human Performances

## **University of Peradeniya**

Temporary Demonstrator

2012-2013

Department of Food Science and Technology

Faculty of Agriculture

## **Research Interests**

Food security, Early life nutrition, Eating behaviors and food choice, Development of food based solutions for enhanced health and nutrition

## **Awards and Acknowledgements**

### **Keels Gold Medal for Food Safety (2013)**

University of Peradeniya

### **Winner, Abstract competition, Humana Integrated Health System Sciences Institute kick-off event (2018)**

University of Houston, Houston, TX

### **Finalist, Early Career 3-Minute Rapid Fire Oral Abstract Competition (2019)**

The Early Career Committees of the Council on Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health and the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention, American Heart Association

## **Publications**

### **Manuscripts accepted, in press and published**

- Daundasekara SS, Beasley AD, O'Connor DP, Sampson M, Hernandez D, Ledoux T. Validation of the intuitive Eating Scale for pregnant women. *Appetite*. 2017;112:201-209. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2017.02.001.
- Ledoux T, Daundasekara S, Van Den Berg P, Leung P, Walker L, Berens PD. Association Between Health Beliefs and Gestational Weight Gain. *Journal of Women's Health (Larchmt)*. 2018;27(3):341-347. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2016.6185.
- Daundasekara SS, Gallardo KR, Santa Maria D, Hernandez DC, Truong C, Yip M, Rhoton J, Kendzor D, Businelle MS. Shelter Service Utilization among Adults Experiencing Homelessness. *Health Behavior and Policy Review*. 2019;6(2):128-139. doi: 10.14485/HBPR.6.2.2.

- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Arlinghaus KR, Tobar N, Reitzel LR, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Cumulative risk factors associated with food insecurity among adults who experience homelessness. *Health Behavior Research*. 2019;2(1). doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1033
- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Arlinghaus KR, Sharma AP, Reitzel LR, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Fruit and vegetable consumption and emotional distress tolerance as potential links between food insecurity and poor physical and mental health among homeless adults. *Preventive Medicine Reports*. 2019; 14. doi: 10.1016/j.pmedr.2019.100824.
- Daundasekara SS, Ledoux T. Healthy gestational weight gain among immigrant women in the United States. *Weight Management Matters*. 2019 Winter;17(2):12-14. <http://www.weightmanagementmatters.online/books/hoky/>
- Daundasekara SS, Arlinghaus KR, Johnston CA. The importance of language in behavior change. *The American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*. 2019. doi: 10.1177/1559827619827810
- Daundasekara SS, Kamdar NP, Dao A, Greer AE, McKyer ELJ, Hernandez DC. Diet quality as a mediator of the relation between income-to-poverty status and overweight/obesity among adults: Moderating effect of sex. *Health Behavior Research*. 2019; 2(4). doi:10.4148/2572-1836.1056.
- Santa Maria D, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Zhang W, Narendorf SC. Sexual Risk Classes among Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Relation to Childhood Adversities, Current Mental Symptoms, Substance Use, and HIV Testing. *PLOS ONE*. 2020; 15(1). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0227331
- Daundasekara SS, O'Connor DP, Cardoso JB, Ledoux T, Hernandez DC. Associations between generational status and smoking behaviors before and during pregnancy among Hispanic women. *Addictive Behaviors*. 2020;104, 106310. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106310
- Daundasekara SS, Arlinghaus KR, Johnston CA. Quality of Life: The Primary Goal of Lifestyle Intervention. 2020; 14(3), 267-270. doi: 10.1177/1559827620907309
- Schuler BR, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Dumenci L, Clark M, Fisher J, Miller AL. Economic Hardship and Child Intake of Foods High in Saturated Fats and Added Sugars: The Mediating Role of Parenting Stress among High-Risk Families. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2020; 23(15), 27812792. doi: 10.1017/S1368980020001366
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler BR, Hernandez DC. Stability and change in early life economic hardship and the role of sex in predicting adolescent overweight/obesity. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 2020; 49(8), 1645-1662. doi: 10.1007/s10964-020-01249-3
- Reitzel LR, Chinamuthevi S, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Chen T-A, Harkara Y, Obasi EM, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Association of problematic alcohol use and food insecurity among homeless men and women. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(10), 3631. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17103631
- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Zvolensky MJ, Reitzel LR, Santa Maria D, Alexander A, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Urban stress indirectly influences psychological symptoms through its association with distress tolerance and perceived social support among adults experiencing homelessness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(15), 5301. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17155301

- Daundasekara SS, O'Connor DP, Cardoso JB, Ledoux T, Hernandez DC. Risk of excess and inadequate gestational weight gain among Hispanic women: Effects of immigration generational status. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(18), 6452. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17186452
- Ledoux, TA, Daundasekara SS, Beasley AD, Robinson J, Sampson M. The association between pre-conception intuitive eating and gestational weight gain. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*. 2021; 26(2), 467-474. doi: 10.1007/s40519-020-00878-8
- Kamdar NP, Lester HF, Daundasekara SS, Greer AE, Hundt N, Utech A, Hernandez DC. Food Insecurity: Comparing odds between working-age veterans and non-veterans with children. *Nursing Outlook*. 2021; 69(2), 212-220. doi: 10.1016/j.outlook.2020.08.011
- Arlinghaus KR, Daundasekara SS, Zaidi Y, Johnston CA. Development and validation of a questionnaire to assess barriers and facilitators to physical activity among Hispanic youth. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. 2021; 53(8), 1666-1674. doi: 10.1249/mss.0000000000002634.
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler BR, Beauchamp JES, Hernandez DC. The mediating effect of parenting stress and couple relationship quality on the association between material hardship trajectories and maternal mental health status. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2021; 290(1), 31-39. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2021.04.058.
- Daundasekara SS, Beauchamp JES, Hernandez DC. Parenting stress mediates the longitudinal effect of maternal depression on child anxiety/depressive symptoms. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2021; 295, 33-39. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2021.08.002.
- Daundasekara SS, Iwundu C, Hernandez DC, Santa Maria D, Zvolensky MJ, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Depression is associated with poor physical health through lower distress tolerance among adults experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Social distress and homelessness*. 2021. doi: 10.1080/10530789.2021.1908488 (Published online, In press)
- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Walton QL, Eigege CY, Marshall AN. Feasibility of delivering an on-campus food distribution program in a community college setting: A mixed methods sequential explanatory investigation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2021; 18, 12106. doi:10.3390/ijerph182212106.
- Eigege CY, Daundasekara SS, Gomez ML, Walton QL, Hernandez DC. Conducting Research Six Feet Apart: The Feasibility of Transitioning Qualitative Research to Meet the Emerging Research Needs During a Pandemic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 2021. doi 10.1177/16094069211069442.
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler BR, Hernandez DC. Independent and cumulative associations of intimate partner violence and food insecurity on maternal depression and generalized anxiety disorder. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*. 2022. 87, 102540. doi: 10.1016/j.janxdis.2022.102540

## Abstracts peer reviewed and published

- Ledoux T, Beasley A, Berens P, Daundasekara S. Participation in a Federal Nutrition Program for Pregnant Women and Gestational Weight Gain: A Prospective Survey Study. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. 2018; 118(10), A165. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2018.08.148

- Daundasekara SS, Schuler B, Hernandez DC, Longoria A. Abstract P295: Synergistic Effect of Food Insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence on Maternal Depressive Symptoms. *Circulation*. 2019; 139(Supp 1), AP295. doi: 10.1161/circ.139.suppl 1.P295
- Bohnert A, Miller AL, Bates C, Davison K, Daundasekara SS. Home Environment and Risk for Obesity in Toddlers, Children, and Adolescents. Society of Behavioral Medicine 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2019; 53(Supp 1), S694-s694. doi: 10.1093/abm/kaz007
- Daundasekara SS. Persistent and Increasing Economic Hardship During Early Childhood Influences Weight Status During Middle Childhood. Society of Behavioral Medicine 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2019; 53(Supp 1), S695-S695. doi: 10.1093/abm/kaz007
- Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Alexander A, Maria DS, Reitzel LR, Kendzor DE, Businelle MS. Perceived Social Support Mediates the Association Between Cumulative Health Risk and Health Outcomes Among Homeless Adults. 2020 ABM Annual Meeting Abstracts Supplement, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2020; 54 (Supp 1), S332-S332. doi: 10.1093/abm/kaaa009
- Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Alexander A, Santa Maria D, Reitzel L, Kendzor DE, Businelle M. Perceived social support mediates the association between cumulative health risk on poor mental and physical health outcomes among homeless adults. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the narrative to meet emerging health behavior challenges", *Health Behavior Research*. 2020;3(2), 30. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1091
- Daundasekara SS, Garcia N, Mejia, K, Hernandez DC. (2020). The impact of randomized control trial of a food assistance program designed for community college students. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the narrative to meet emerging health behavior challenges", *Health Behavior Research*. 2020; 3(2), 61. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1091
- Mejia K, Garcia N, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC. (2020). Community college students food insecurity and mental health status after participating in the food scholarship program. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the narrative to meet emerging health behavior challenges", *Health Behavior Research*. 2020; 3(2), 60. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1091
- Olmeda K, Eigege C, Daundasekara SS, Walton QL Hernandez DC. (2021). Food and Fotos: Using photos to transform the narratives of low-income community college students experiences with accessing food. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the Narrative to Meet Emerging Health Behavior Challenges", *Health Behavior Research*. 2021; 4(3), 71-72. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1121
- Eigege C, Daundasekara SS, Olmeda K, Walton QL Hernandez DC. (2021). Conducting research six feet apart: Transforming qualitative research to meet the emerging research needs during a pandemic. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the Narrative to Meet Emerging Health Behavior Challenges", *Health Behavior Research*. 2021; 4(3), 18-19. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1121
- Daundasekara SS, Eigege C, Olmeda K, Walton QL Hernandez DC. (2021). Food distribution program positively influence the dietary behavior of community college students: A mixed

method study. The American Academy of Health Behavior 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting: "Transforming the Narrative to Meet Emerging Health Behavior Challenges", Health Behavior Research. 2021; 4(3), 72. doi: 10.4148/2572-1836.1121

- Ledoux T, Daundasekara SS, Arlinghaus K, Cepni A Johnston C. (2021). Validation of the Intuitive Eating Scale-2 For Hispanic Adolescents. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2021; 121(10), A142. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2021.08.070

## Presentations

### Peer reviewed, accepted and completed

- Ledoux T, Beasley A, Berens P, Daundasekara, S. (2018) Participation in a Federal Nutrition Program for Pregnant Women and Gestational Weight Gain: A Prospective Survey Study. Poster presented at Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Convention & Exposition, Washington, DC.
- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Yip M, Truong C, Gallardo KR, Santa Maria D, Rhoton J, Kendzor D, Businelle MS. (2018) Shelter service utilization among homeless adults: Associations with drug use, binge drinking, and mental health diagnosis. Poster presented at the Caucus on Homelessness program of the APHA's 2018 Annual Meeting & Expo, San Diego, CA.
- Hernandez DC, Schuler B, Daundasekara SS, Marshall A, LaPergola C. (2018) Intimate partner violence and food insecurity evidence from the Fragile Families Study. The Food and Nutrition program of the APHA's 2018 Annual Meeting & Expo, San Diego, CA.
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler B, Nguyen T, Hernandez DC. (2018). Influences of early childhood economic hardship on adolescent obesity. The Humana Integrated Health System Sciences Institute kick-off event. Houston, Texas.
- Hernandez DC, Schuler BR, Daundasekara SS, Marshall A, LaPergola C (2019). Intimate partner violence and food insecurity evidence from the Fragile Families Study. APHA's 2018 Annual Meeting and Expo, San Diego, CA.
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler B, Nguyen T, Hernandez DC. (2019). Synergistic effect of food insecurity and intimate partner violence on maternal depressive symptoms. Poster presented at the American Heart Association, EPI/Lifestyle 2019 Scientific Sessions. Houston, Texas.
- Daundasekara SS, Schuler B, Nguyen T, Hernandez DC. (2019). Persistent and increasing economic hardship during early childhood influences weight status during middle childhood. The Society of Behavioral Medicine, 40th Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions, Washington, D.C.
- Cottingham M, Lee D, Daundasekara SS (2019). The next level: An examination of barriers for athletes with disabilities at different levels of competition. North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Kamdar N, Daundasekara SS, Lester H, Hernandez DC, Greer A, Utech A (2019). Food insecurity among US veterans with children: Findings from NHANES 2011-2014. APHA's 2019 Annual Meeting and Expo, Philadelphia, PA.
- Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Alexander A, Santa Maria D, Reitzel LR, Kendzor D, Businelle MS. (2020, April). Perceived social support mediates the association between



cumulative health risk on poor mental and physical health outcomes among homeless adults [Poster session]. The Society of Behavioral Medicine, 41st Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions, San Francisco, California.

<https://www.sbm.org/UserFiles/file/SBMAnnualMeetingUpdate.pdf> (Conference cancelled)

- Garcia N, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC, Alexander A, Santa Maria D, Reitzel LR, Kendzor D, Businelle MS. (2020, June). Perceived social support mediates the association between cumulative health risk on poor mental and physical health outcomes among homeless adults [Poster session]. The 2020 Annual American Academy of Health Behavior. Napa, California. <https://www.aahb.org/> (Conference cancelled)
- Mejia K, Garcia N, Daundasekara SS, Hernandez DC. (2020, June). Community college students food insecurity and mental Health status after participating in the Food Scholarship Program [Poster session]. The 2020 Annual American Academy of Health Behavior. Napa, California. <https://www.aahb.org/> (Conference cancelled)
- Daundasekara SS, Garcia N, Mejia K, Hernandez DC. (2020, June). The impact of a randomized control trial of a food assistance program designed for community college students [Poster session]. The 2020 Annual American Academy of Health Behavior. Napa, California. <https://www.aahb.org/> (Conference cancelled)
- Hernandez DC, Daundasekara SS, Iwundu C, Schuler B. (2020, November). Community violence predicts food insecurity through lower neighborhood collective efficacy. [Oral presentation]. Presented virtually at the annual National Council on Family Relations.
- Olmeda K, Eigege C, Daundasekara SS, Walton QL, Hernandez DC. (2021, March). Food and Fotos: Using photos to transform the narratives of low-income community college students experiences with accessing food [Poster session]. The 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Health Behavior, Virtual conference due to COVID-19.
- Eigege C, Daundasekara SS, Olmeda K, Walton QL, Hernandez DC. (2021, March). Conducting research six feet apart: Transforming qualitative research to meet the emerging research needs during a pandemic. [Poster session]. The 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Health Behavior, Virtual conference due to COVID-19.
- Daundasekara SS, Eigege C, Olmeda K, Walton QL, Hernandez DC. (2021, March). Food distribution program positively influence the dietary behavior of community college students: A mixed method study. [Poster session]. The 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Health Behavior, Virtual conference due to COVID-19.
- Ledoux T, Daundasekara S, Arlinghaus K, Cepni A, Johnston C. (2021, October). Validation of the Intuitive Eating Scale-2 for Hispanic adolescents. [Poster session]. Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo 2021, Virtual conference due to COVID-19.

## Professional Service

### Invited Journal Peer Review

Family & Community Health	Peer Reviewer	2020-present
Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless	Peer Reviewer	2020-present

## Poster/Abstract Reviews

Basic and Applied Sciences Technical Session      Abstract reviewer      2018  
of the International Research Conference  
of Kothalawala Defense University

## Professional Memberships

Society of Behavioral Medicine	Member	2019-2021
American Heart Association	Member	2019-2020