



## Artificial Intelligence in the Field of Nutrition: An Overview

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### ABSTRACT

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the field of nutrition marks a significant transformation in how health and dietary practices are managed, understood, and personalized. Traditional nutrition methods often fall short due to their dependence on self-reporting, lack of scalability, and limited personalization. AI, leveraging technologies such as machine learning, computer vision, and natural language processing, offers innovative solutions by enabling precision nutrition, real-time monitoring, and adaptive feedback mechanisms. This review explores the multifaceted role of AI in nutrition, focusing on its applications in the development of advanced nutritional metrics, personalized dietary recommendations, and public health interventions. Through a series of case studies and thematic analysis, the study highlights AI's potential to enhance individual and population-level nutrition outcomes. However, the widespread adoption of AI in this domain is accompanied by critical ethical, technical, and regulatory challenges, including concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and accessibility. The findings emphasize that for AI to fulfill its promise in nutrition, it must be implemented within ethical frameworks, supported by inclusive data, and developed through interdisciplinary collaboration. Ultimately, AI has the capacity to redefine global nutrition standards, making dietary guidance more intelligent, equitable, and effective.

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## 1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the field of nutrition marks a pivotal advancement in how we approach health, wellness, and disease prevention. Traditionally, nutrition has been a field reliant on generalized dietary guidelines and manual methods of tracking food intake, which are often limited by human error, recall bias, and lack of personalization. However, the emergence of AI technologies has begun to reshape this paradigm, enabling a data-driven, highly individualized approach to dietary management.

AI's unique capabilities—such as deep learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and real-time data analytics—allow it to process vast and complex nutritional datasets with remarkable speed and accuracy. These technologies can detect patterns in eating behavior, predict nutritional deficiencies, analyze food composition through image recognition, and adapt dietary recommendations based on individual preferences, health conditions, or even genetic profiles. As a result, AI is not just a tool for efficiency but a catalyst for precision nutrition, helping bridge the gap between dietary science and personal health goals.

The global shift toward preventive healthcare has further amplified the relevance of AI in nutrition. With chronic lifestyle-related diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and metabolic syndromes on the rise, there is an urgent need for proactive and customized dietary interventions. AI-powered systems can monitor these conditions in real-time and provide actionable recommendations that are context-aware and continuously refined based on feedback and behavioral data.

Moreover, in a world increasingly reliant on digital platforms, AI serves as the backbone of smart nutrition apps, wearable health tech, and digital therapeutics that empower individuals to take control of their nutritional choices. Whether it's recommending a low-sodium recipe to a hypertensive patient, tracking micronutrient intake in athletes, or aiding public health officials in assessing community-level food insecurity, the applications of AI are vast and transformative.

This paper delves into the multidimensional role of AI in the field of nutrition, focusing on three key pillars: the development of advanced nutritional metrics, the deployment of real-time dietary



monitoring tools, and the use of AI for iterative improvement in dietary strategies. Through this lens, the review not only highlights current innovations but also evaluates the challenges and ethical considerations surrounding AI's role in shaping the future of nutrition science.

## 2. Background of the Study

Traditional nutritional science has relied heavily on self-reported dietary assessment methods such as 24-hour dietary recalls, food frequency questionnaires (FFQs), and manual calorie tracking. While these tools have played a crucial role in epidemiological research and dietary planning, they are inherently limited by several factors. Chief among these are human error, social desirability bias, and memory lapses, which can lead to significant inaccuracies in reporting actual food consumption. Additionally, such methods are time-consuming, require trained personnel to administer and analyze, and often fail to capture the full diversity and complexity of dietary patterns—especially in multicultural or low-literacy populations where standardized food lists may not reflect local eating habits.

The scalability of traditional methods is also a concern. As the demand for personalized nutrition grows, the one-size-fits-all nature of conventional assessments becomes increasingly inadequate. In today's global health landscape, which is marked by rising rates of obesity, diabetes, malnutrition, and other nutrition-related diseases, there is an urgent need for more precise, scalable, and adaptive tools that can support individualized dietary interventions at both the clinical and population levels.

This is where Artificial Intelligence (AI) enters the picture as a game-changing innovation. AI technologies—including machine learning algorithms, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and neural networks—are rapidly being integrated into nutritional science to overcome these limitations. For example, AI-driven image recognition tools can identify food items from photos taken by users, estimate portion sizes, and calculate nutrient content with high accuracy. NLP enables users to log their meals using voice input, while back-end algorithms parse the information and translate it into structured dietary data. Machine learning models can analyze large datasets from electronic health records, wearable devices, and dietary logs to predict nutrient deficiencies, detect unhealthy eating patterns, and even forecast health risks based on consumption trends.

Moreover, AI facilitates the shift from static, retrospective dietary guidance to dynamic, real-time feedback. Rather than relying on sporadic consultations with dietitians or retrospective data, AI-powered apps and platforms offer continuous, personalized insights that evolve with the user's behavior



and health status. This allows for a more proactive and responsive approach to nutrition management, fostering long-term dietary adherence and better health outcomes.

In essence, the integration of AI into nutritional science marks a foundational shift—from generalized, manually collected data toward highly specific, automated, and predictive analytics. This transition not only enhances the accuracy and relevance of dietary assessments but also lays the groundwork for a future where nutrition is tailored to the individual in real time, supported by robust data and adaptive intelligence.

### **3. Scope of the Study**

This review examines the integration of AI across the nutritional landscape. Areas of focus include the use of AI in dietary assessment (e.g., food image recognition and voice-based tracking), personalized nutrition algorithms based on genetic and microbiome data, AI-powered health risk prediction, and nutritional behavior modeling. Additionally, the review explores AI's use in public health initiatives, such as nutritional interventions at a population level, and its role in managing lifestyle-related chronic conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes. The scope spans clinical settings, wellness platforms, and digital health ecosystems.

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the integration and applications of Artificial Intelligence in nutrition.
- To evaluate the impact of AI-driven tools and platforms on individual and public health outcomes.
- To identify the ethical, technical, and practical challenges in adopting AI in nutrition science.

### **5. Review of literature**

#### **Artificial Intelligence in Nutritional Metrics Development**

The development of accurate nutritional metrics is foundational to diet planning and health monitoring. AI enables more sophisticated metrics by integrating vast datasets, including food composition databases, individual health records, genomics, and even social media food posts. For instance, machine learning models can assess micronutrient intake from food images or predict



metabolic responses to meals using algorithms trained on glycemic index databases and continuous glucose monitoring data (Topol, 2019).

Furthermore, AI supports the transition from population-level dietary guidelines to individualized nutrition strategies, a concept known as precision nutrition. AI-driven models factor in age, sex, activity level, genetic markers, and microbiome composition to deliver metrics that align with personal physiological needs (Zeevi et al., 2015). This marks a significant advancement over one-size-fits-all approaches to nutrition.

### **AI-Driven Real-Time Monitoring in Nutrition**

Real-time dietary monitoring is crucial for chronic disease management, weight loss, and behavioral nutrition therapy. Traditional logging methods are time-consuming and unreliable. In contrast, AI tools offer real-time analysis through food image recognition apps (e.g., CalorieMama, BiteSnap) and voice-enabled assistants that log meals based on natural language input (Yach et al., 2020).

Wearable technologies paired with AI, such as smartwatches and glucose monitors, further enhance the monitoring ecosystem. They provide live feedback on caloric expenditure, blood glucose levels, and hydration status. Predictive models built on these inputs can alert users of nutritional imbalances or deviations from health goals, enabling timely corrective actions (Nguyen et al., 2021).

### **Continuous Improvement through AI in Nutritional Practices**

AI's capacity for pattern recognition and predictive analytics allows for iterative improvement in dietary interventions. By analyzing historical intake data and outcomes, AI can adjust recommendations dynamically. For example, an AI system may suggest reducing sodium intake after detecting a correlation with elevated blood pressure readings over time.

In clinical nutrition, AI tools assist dietitians by offering evidence-based suggestions and adaptive meal plans based on patient progress. In public health, governments can use AI to identify nutritional gaps in populations and optimize food distribution programs. Such feedback loops enable a continuous refinement of nutritional strategies at both the individual and systemic levels (Chen et al., 2022).



## **AI for Personalized Nutrition and Behavioral Modification**

One of the most impactful applications of AI in nutrition is in personalized meal recommendations. By analyzing health data, genetic profiles, allergies, and dietary preferences, AI systems can deliver individualized dietary suggestions tailored to specific health goals, such as managing cholesterol or improving gut health. AI platforms like Nutrino and DayTwo utilize CGM data and gut microbiome analytics to predict how users will respond to specific foods (Berry et al., 2020).

Moreover, AI enhances behavioral change by applying reinforcement learning algorithms that adapt interventions based on user compliance and feedback. These systems act as digital coaches, nudging users toward healthier eating habits through timely suggestions, gamification, and motivational messaging (Hollis et al., 2019).

## **AI in Population Health and Nutritional Epidemiology**

Beyond individual-level interventions, AI is increasingly used in population-level nutrition research. Governments and health organizations use AI to process large-scale data from national surveys, food supply chains, and disease registries to identify correlations between dietary patterns and public health outcomes (Amini et al., 2022).

For example, AI models can map food deserts in urban areas using satellite imagery and socioeconomic data, helping policymakers prioritize nutritional interventions. In epidemiology, AI is being used to model the impact of dietary changes on disease incidence and healthcare costs across demographics (Nguyen & Trinh, 2021).

## **Integration of AI in Dietetic Practice and Clinical Decision Support**

In clinical settings, AI serves as a decision-support tool for registered dietitians (RDs) and nutritionists. AI can interpret patient data—such as blood tests, medications, and dietary intake—and recommend modifications that align with therapeutic goals. Platforms like Savor Health have been used to support cancer patients by offering AI-guided nutritional advice based on treatment regimens and symptoms (Mehta et al., 2021).

AI also enables workflow optimization in dietetics by automating repetitive tasks like nutrient calculations and charting. This allows practitioners to focus on patient engagement and clinical judgment, enhancing the quality of care delivered in hospital and outpatient settings.

## **6. Case Studies**

### **Case Study 1: Nutrino AI for Personalized Meal Planning**

Nutrino, acquired by Medtronic, developed a platform that utilizes CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitoring) data and machine learning to deliver personalized meal recommendations. It showed notable success in managing postprandial blood glucose among individuals with diabetes (Carter et al., 2020).

### **Case Study 2: IBM Watson and Nutritionix Database**

IBM Watson's partnership with Nutritionix resulted in an AI-powered nutrition tracking tool with a database of over 800,000 food items. It provided real-time, accurate calorie estimation using natural language input and image processing (IBM, 2021).

### **Case Study 3: Glooko for Chronic Disease Nutrition Management**

Glooko integrates AI with wearable devices to analyze glucose levels, food intake, and physical activity. Its predictive algorithms improve compliance and outcomes in patients managing diabetes and metabolic disorders (López et al., 2023).

### **Case Study 4: DayTwo and Gut Microbiome-Based Nutrition**

DayTwo applies AI to gut microbiome data to personalize nutrition for glycemic control. Their predictive models recommend foods that prevent post-meal glucose spikes, particularly benefiting individuals with insulin resistance (Zeevi et al., 2015).

### **Case Study 5: Bite AI for Automated Food Logging**

Bite AI uses computer vision to recognize meals from photos and log nutritional data. Its app helps users track their diet effortlessly, improving adherence and awareness in weight management programs (Smith et al., 2020).

### **Case Study 6: Suggestic—Augmented Reality for Meal Planning**

Suggestic offers AR-based meal planning that overlays nutrition data in real time while shopping or dining. AI personalizes the user experience based on dietary restrictions, health goals, and allergies (Hernandez et al., 2019).



### **Case Study 7: Savor Health for Oncology Nutrition**

Savor Health provides personalized nutrition support to cancer patients using AI that adjusts meal plans based on treatment side effects, appetite changes, and nutrient needs (Mehta et al., 2021).

### **Case Study 8: Nutrify India's Smart Nutrition Platform**

Nutrify India launched an AI-driven solution to assess micronutrient gaps in rural populations using mobile data collection. It guided local food interventions and fortified food distribution (Gupta & Rao, 2022).

### **Case Study 9: Foodvisor – Real-Time Nutrient Breakdown**

Foodvisor uses AI to analyze meal photos and give a real-time nutritional breakdown. Studies show users reduced calorie intake and increased protein consumption after 3 months of use (Dubois et al., 2020).

### **Case Study 10: Edamam API in Digital Health Apps**

Edamam offers a nutrition analysis API used by dozens of health and fitness platforms to interpret recipes and meal logs. Its NLP-based engine enables seamless food tracking with over 95% text parsing accuracy (Edamam, 2021).

## **7. Challenges and Ethical Considerations**

### **1. Data Privacy and Security**

AI systems in nutrition often process sensitive data—health records, genetic profiles, and eating behaviors. Mishandling this data can lead to breaches of privacy, requiring strict adherence to data protection laws like HIPAA and GDPR (Shah et al., 2021).

### **2. Algorithmic Bias and Inequity**

If training datasets lack diversity, AI models may reflect socioeconomic, racial, or cultural biases. This could lead to inaccurate recommendations for underrepresented groups, widening health disparities (Obermeyer et al., 2019).

### **3. Lack of Transparency (Black Box Problem)**





Many AI systems, especially deep learning models, provide recommendations without clear explanations. This opacity reduces user trust and makes clinical validation challenging (Samek et al., 2017).

#### **4. Over-Reliance on Technology**

Users may become overly dependent on AI, undermining self-awareness and clinical judgment. This is particularly risky in sensitive conditions like eating disorders or pediatric care (Anderson et al., 2020).

#### **5. Inadequate Regulation and Oversight**

There is a lack of standardized frameworks for regulating AI in digital nutrition. Without proper governance, misinformation, unsafe dietary advice, or commercially biased algorithms could go unchecked (WHO, 2021).

#### **6. Accuracy and Generalizability Issues**

AI models trained on limited datasets might perform poorly in diverse environments or cultures. Nutritional habits vary widely, and a model trained in urban U.S. may not suit rural India or East Asia (Nguyen et al., 2021).

#### **7. Ethical Use of Genetic and Microbiome Data**

Using AI with genetic or microbiome data raises ethical concerns about informed consent, data ownership, and potential misuse by third parties like insurers or employers (Kalkman et al., 2019).

#### **8. Commercial Exploitation and Conflicts of Interest**

Some AI nutrition platforms may prioritize commercial products or sponsored content in their recommendations, compromising objectivity and public trust (Wilson et al., 2020).

#### **9. Digital Divide and Accessibility**

AI-driven nutrition tools often require smartphones, internet access, and digital literacy—factors that may exclude the elderly, low-income populations, and marginalized groups (van Dijk, 2017).

#### **10. Environmental and Cultural Insensitivity**



AI systems may recommend foods that are not locally available, culturally acceptable, or environmentally sustainable, resulting in impractical or inappropriate advice (Haddad et al., 2020).

## 8. Findings

Based on the literature review, case studies, and analysis presented in this study, several key findings emerge regarding the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in transforming the field of nutrition:

### 1. Enhanced Precision and Personalization

AI enables the development of highly personalized dietary recommendations by integrating multiple data sources such as genomics, microbiome profiles, wearable device outputs, and behavioral patterns. This supports the advancement of **precision nutrition**, offering a significant improvement over generalized dietary guidelines.

### 2. Real-Time Dietary Monitoring is Revolutionizing Self-Tracking

AI-powered tools, including food image recognition apps and wearable-integrated nutrition trackers, provide **real-time monitoring** of dietary intake and physiological responses. These innovations enhance user engagement and enable timely interventions for individuals managing chronic diseases.

### 3. AI Supports Clinical Decision-Making

AI serves as an assistive technology for healthcare professionals, especially dietitians and nutritionists. Clinical decision-support systems powered by AI help interpret lab results, monitor patient compliance, and deliver adaptive diet plans based on individual progress and medical history.

### 4. Public Health Applications are Emerging

AI is increasingly being used in **population-level nutrition modeling**, enabling governments and NGOs to identify malnutrition hotspots, forecast food insecurity, and optimize nutrition-related public health programs based on real-time data.

### 5. Ethical and Practical Challenges Persist

Despite the promising potential, there are critical concerns around **data privacy**, **algorithmic bias**, **digital accessibility**, and **explainability** of AI systems. Many AI models are limited by non-representative training data and lack transparency in how they generate recommendations.



## 9. Suggestions

To fully harness the power of AI in nutrition while mitigating risks, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

### 1. Develop Ethical Frameworks for AI in Nutrition

Regulatory bodies and AI developers should collaborate to create **clear ethical guidelines** that prioritize user consent, data protection, and transparency. These frameworks should be embedded in all AI development cycles and deployment strategies.

### 2. Promote Inclusive and Culturally Diverse Datasets

AI models must be trained on **diverse datasets** that reflect global dietary patterns, cultural nuances, and various socioeconomic groups. This ensures equitable and effective outcomes across different populations and reduces the risk of algorithmic bias.

### 3. Foster Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

To ensure AI tools are scientifically valid and user-friendly, collaboration is needed between **nutritionists, AI researchers, healthcare providers, behavioral scientists, and ethicists**. Interdisciplinary approaches will help design well-rounded and impactful AI systems.

### 4. Enhance Explainability and User Trust

AI developers should integrate **explainable AI (XAI)** techniques into nutritional systems to ensure that users and clinicians understand how recommendations are generated. Transparent systems foster greater trust, accountability, and clinical uptake.

### 5. Expand Accessibility and Usability

Stakeholders should prioritize **designing AI nutrition tools that are accessible** to users with varying levels of digital literacy, language proficiency, and internet connectivity. Mobile-first, offline-capable, and intuitive interfaces are essential to bridge the digital divide.

## 11. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is profoundly transforming the field of nutrition by introducing innovative tools and methodologies that enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and personalization of dietary



management. Through the integration of AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and computer vision, nutrition science is evolving from a static and generalized discipline into a dynamic, data-driven ecosystem. This transformation is not only improving how individuals track and understand their dietary habits but also revolutionizing how healthcare professionals deliver nutritional advice and interventions.

AI enables the creation of smarter nutritional metrics that go far beyond simple calorie counts. It facilitates the synthesis of complex datasets—including genomic profiles, microbiome composition, lifestyle factors, and real-time biometric data—to deliver tailored nutrition strategies. By doing so, it supports the emergence of **precision nutrition**, where diet plans are optimized for everyone's biological and physiological needs. This marks a significant departure from the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach, paving the way for more effective dietary interventions that can help prevent or manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity.

Moreover, AI's ability to enable **real-time monitoring** through wearables, smartphone apps, and connected devices empowers users to make informed dietary decisions throughout their day. It closes the feedback loop between food intake and health outcomes, offering immediate insights and adaptive suggestions that promote sustainable behavior change. On a larger scale, AI also plays a critical role in **public health and population-level dietary modeling**, allowing policymakers to analyze consumption trends, identify nutritional deficiencies in vulnerable populations, and design evidence-based interventions with far-reaching impact.

However, as with any transformative technology, the benefits of AI in nutrition come with a set of critical challenges that must be responsibly addressed. **Data privacy and ethical governance** are at the forefront, as AI systems often require access to sensitive health data. Ensuring the protection of this information and securing informed consent are essential for building trust among users. In addition, **algorithmic fairness and inclusivity** must be prioritized to prevent the reinforcement of existing health disparities. AI models must be trained on diverse datasets that reflect the full spectrum of cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and dietary practices to ensure equitable outcomes for all users.

Another key concern is **transparency and explainability**. As AI models become more complex, their decision-making processes can become opaque—a phenomenon often referred to as the "black box" problem. For AI to be effectively integrated into clinical nutrition and public health strategies, its



recommendations must be interpretable and clinically validated, allowing dietitians, physicians, and users to understand the rationale behind them.

In conclusion, while AI presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance the effectiveness, reach, and personalization of nutrition science, its successful adoption hinges on thoughtful design, ethical oversight, and inclusive innovation. With appropriate regulation and a commitment to fairness and accountability, AI has the potential to play a **pivotal role in advancing global nutritional health**. It can help bridge the gap between cutting-edge scientific research and everyday dietary practice, ultimately fostering a healthier, more informed, and more empowered global population.

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