

## Dr. Ya-Ke “Grace” Wu, PhD, RN

### Assistant Professor of Nursing, CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

Dr. Ya-Ke “Grace” Wu is an Assistant Professor in the University of North Carolina School of Nursing. Dr. Wu's research focuses on biological predictors of eating disorders with a specialization in the roles of stress and appetite hormones in the mechanisms of eating disorders. She has also studied weight stigmatization in Asian-Americans and psychosocial factors associated with weight-related self-stigma in young adults.

Dr. Wu received her BSN at Central Taiwan University of Science and Technology and her MSN at Kaohsiung Medical University in Taiwan. Prior to pursuing her PhD degree, Dr. Wu worked as a registered nurse for twelve years and a lecturer in evidence-based practice for seven years in Taiwan. She completed her PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing in 2018. Dr. Wu completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of North Carolina Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders under Dr. Jessica Baker that was funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research.



Dr. Wu's overarching research interests include investigating prediction and prevention of eating disorders using a comprehensive model that explores genetic, psychological, and environmental risk factors. In her PhD research, she studied hair cortisol as a biomarker of chronic stress to investigate the link between the stress of weight stigma and the biological stress response of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis activity at the UNC Biobehavioral Laboratory. Dr. Wu is also actively engaged in expanding eating disorders genetic research to Taiwan.

She has been fortunate to be the recipient of various awards and honors including the Virginia J. Neelon Endowed Bio-Behavioral Nursing Scholarship and she is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Dr. Wu is an advocate for the Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) – the world's largest genetic study into eating disorders ever performed, that aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person's risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder, to improve treatment, and ultimately, save lives.

“Eating disorders are complex conditions influenced by biological, psychological, and environmental factors. The genetic information that we learn from the EDGI study can be used to develop integrated risk profiles of eating disorders to improve future prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.” said Dr. Wu.

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