

Yuru Huang

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Research Summary

I am a public health researcher studying how food environments influence dietary choices and health. My work uses data science to measure food environments at scale and evaluates policies and interventions that promote healthier choices. I am committed to conducting thoughtful, rigorous research with a clear path to impact.

Academic Appointments

2026 -	Assistant Professor	Bursky School of Public Health, Washington University in St. Louis
2025 - 2026	Assistant Professor	Department of Preventive Medicine, The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)

Education

University of Cambridge

PhD in Medical Science (Epidemiology)	Oct 2020 - May 2024
Gates Cambridge Scholar Prestigious fully-funded scholarship, 1.3% acceptance rate	
Thesis Advancing Measures of the Out-of-Home Food Environment: A Big Data Approach	

Johns Hopkins University

Master of Health Science, Epidemiology	Aug 2014 - May 2016
Certificate Health Finance and Management	

Sun Yat-sen University

Bachelor of Science, Life Sciences	Sep 2010 - Jun 2014
Honors First class scholarship; graduated top of class (1/30)	

Research Areas

Dietary Public Health	Food and Nutrition Policy	Big Data Applications in Nutrition
Food Systems	Digital Food Environment	Natural Experiments

Policy/Research Impact

2026	Communicated research on the FDA’s proposed nutrition labels (interview at <i>Action News 5</i>)
2026	Reviewed Bite Back’s AI method for assessing school meal compliance (featured in <i>The Guardian</i>)
2025	Research on dark food retail informs the local policy agenda (findings featured on ITV’s <i>Tonight</i>)
2024	Developed AI models to assess menu healthiness across England (featured in <i>The Guardian</i>)
2024	Contributed to the State of the Nation’s Food Industry Report 2024 by the Food Foundation
2023	Provided data to Food Standards Scotland, supporting their calorie labelling policy
2021	Contributed to the FDA’s voluntary sodium reduction goals

Professional Experience ◇ Full-time position

2025 -	Short-term Consultant (STC)	The World Bank Group
2025	Postdoctoral Scholar◇	Department of Human Ecology, UC Davis
2024	Postdoctoral Research Associate◇	MRC Epidemiology Unit, University of Cambridge
2023 - 2024	Short-term Consultant (STC)	WHO European Office for NCD Prevention
2017 - 2020	Data Scientist (Staff Fellow)◇	Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA
2016 - 2017	Population Health Research Associate◇	Johns Hopkins Healthcare LLC
2015 - 2016	Research Assistant	Multi-Center AIDS Cohort Study, Johns Hopkins University
2015	Research Assistant	The University of Hong Kong

Teaching Experience

- 2025** *Food Systems Policies to Improve Nutrition and Reduce NCD Risk*, Guest Lecturer, UC Davis
- 2022 - 2023** *Foundations of Evidence Based Practice*, Small group teaching for 15 medical students, Cambridge
- 2022** *Generalised Linear Models (MPhil in Population Health Sciences)*, Demonstrator, Cambridge
- 2021 - 2022** *Survival Analysis (MPhil in Population Health Sciences)*, Demonstrator, Cambridge
- 2021** *Statistics for Health Data Science (MPhil in Population Health Sciences)*, Demonstrator, Cambridge
- 2021** *Principles of Biostatistics (MPhil in Population Health Sciences)*, Demonstrator, Cambridge

Honors and Awards

- 2026** *ISBNPA 2026 Award Session Selection* Top 3 abstracts in the Special Interest Group
- 2020** *Gates Cambridge Scholarship* Future leaders committed to improving the lives of others
- 2018** *FDA Incentive Awards* Outstanding contribution to the FDA's mission
- 2017** *FDA Incentive Awards* Outstanding contribution to the FDA's mission
- 2015** *Master's Tuition Scholarship*, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- 2011 - 2013** *First class scholarship*, Sun Yat-sen University

Research Supervision

- 2025 -** Jovan Radovic, Undergraduate, Computer Science & Statistics, UC Davis
Algorithm auditing and automated data collection in meal delivery apps
- 2025** Nhan Nguyen, PhD Candidate, Biomedical Engineering, UC Davis
Computer vision methods to automate retail food environment assessment
- 2023** Philippa Dent, Master's Student, Population Health Sciences, University of Cambridge
Master's thesis: online and physical takeaway food environments and dietary behaviors

Current Research Support

Title: *Healthy Food Atlas for Breast Cancer Survivors: Integrating Local Food Environment Data into Clinical Decision Support*

Role: Contract PI

Funder: National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Period: 2026–2027

Description: Developing and validating a national, geocoded Healthy Food Atlas to support dietary counseling for breast cancer survivors.

Publications

**30+ peer-reviewed publications, including 12 first-authored publications*

- 1** **Huang, Y.**, Wolf, E. C., Gil, A. M., Matas, K. J. G., Powell, L. M., Schermbeck, R. M., & Falbe, J. (2026). The retail food environment following a mandatory healthy checkout policy: A natural experimental evaluation [In press]. *PLOS Medicine*.
- 2** **Huang, Y.**, Wolf, E. C., Matas, K. J., Lemmon, B., Marquez, A., Powell, L. M., Schermbeck, R. M., & Falbe, J. (2026). Healthfulness of foods and beverages displayed at store checkouts in Southern California, 2023 [In press]. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.
- 3** White, J. S., Xu, Z., **Huang, Y.**, Powell, L. M., Grummon, A. H., & Falbe, J. (2026). Impact of Berkeley's healthy checkout ordinance on the sale of soda and candy: A quasi-experimental study [In press]. *The Lancet Public Health*.
- 4** **Huang, Y.**, Lemmon, B., Musicus, A. A., Roberto, C. A., Hall, M. G., & Falbe, J. (2026). Effects of added-sugar warning labels on restaurant menus in the USA: An online randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet Public Health*, 11(6), e375–e385.

- 5 **Huang, Y.**, O'Sullivan, K., Block, J. P., Petimar, J., Lee, C. J., & Grummon, A. H. (2026). Impact of the Food and Drug Administration's proposed front-of-package label and alternative designs on consumer understanding: A randomized experiment. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 70(5), 108222.
- 6 Patterson, R., Carey, E. G., Garrott, K., **Huang, Y.**, Ogilvie, D., Hadfield-Hill, S., Cope, A., Davis, A., van Sluijs, E., Panter, J., et al. (2026). Effectiveness and equity impacts of traffic restriction schemes outside schools: A controlled natural experimental study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 23(1), 19.
- 7 Kokka, K., **Huang, Y.**, Itova, I., Schönlieb, C. B., Foley, L., Woodcock, J., & Burgoine, T. (2026). Computer vision for extraction of environmental characteristics from street images: A scoping review of methods and applications. *Journal of Transport & Health*, 47, 102209.
- 8 Essman, M., Burgoine, T., **Huang, Y.**, Jones, A., Polden, M., Robinson, E., Sharp, S. J., Smith, R., White, M., & Adams, J. (2025). Changes in energy content of menu items at out-of-home food outlets in England after calorie labelling policy implementation: A pre-post analysis (2021–2022). *BMJ Public Health*, 3(2).
- 9 Finlay, A., **Huang, Y.**, Adams, J., Jones, A., Evans, R., & Robinson, E. (2025). Associations between out of home food sector outlet menu healthiness scores, menu characteristics and energy consumed by customers in 2021–2022. *Appetite*, 219, 108424.
- 10 Nield, L., Burgoine, T., Lake, A. A., Moore, H. J., Soon-Sinclair, J., Adams, J., Bishop, T. R. P., Bowles, S., Boyland, E., Bradford, C., Chang, M., Cummins, S., Duffy, J., Ferris, I., Harness, D., **Huang, Y.**, Laheri, Z., Lloyd, S., Martin, H., ... Beaumont, J. D. (2025). What are 'dark kitchens'? a consensus definition from public, local authority, business and academic stakeholders in the United Kingdom. *Perspectives in Public Health*.
- 11 Hoenink, J. C., **Huang, Y.**, & Adams, J. (2025). Linking physical food outlets to online platforms: A cross-sectional machine learning approach to analysing socioeconomic variations in Great Britain. *Health & Place*, 95, 103524.
- 12 **Huang, Y.**, Bishop, T. R., Adams, J., Cummins, S., Keeble, M., Rinaldi, C., Schiff, A., & Burgoine, T. (2025). Understanding the socio-spatial distribution of "dark retail" in England: Development of a unique retail location dataset. *Health & Place*, 94, 103462.
- 13 **Huang, Y.**, Weerasinghe, N., Adams, J., Rippin, H., Hetz, K., Zhiteneva, O., & Wickramasinghe, K. (2025). Menu item prices and promotions offered on a meal delivery app in the UK and their socio-economic patterns. *Public Health Nutrition*, 28(1), e110.
- 14 **Huang, Y.**, Burgoine, T., White, C. M., Keeble, M., Bishop, T. R., Hammond, D., & Adams, J. (2025). Neighbourhood out-of-home food environment, menu healthiness, and their associations with meal purchasing and diet quality: A multiverse analysis. *Nutrition Journal*, 24(1), 56.
- 15 Hoenink, J. C., **Huang, Y.**, Keeble, M., Mackenbach, J. D., de Pinho, M. G., Vanderlee, L., Hammond, D., White, C. M., Burgoine, T., & Adams, J. (2025). Physical and online food outlet availability and its influence on out-of-home dietary behaviours in Great Britain: A repeated cross-sectional study. *SSM - Population Health*, 30, 101773.
- 16 Liu, B., Mytton, O., Rahilly, J., Amies-Cull, B., Rogers, N., Bishop, T., Chang, M., Cummins, S., Derbyshire, D., Hassan, S., **Huang, Y.**, Medina-Lara, A., Savory, B., Smith, R., Thompson, C., White, M., Adams, J., & Burgoine, T. (2024). Development of an approach to forecast future takeaway outlet growth around schools and population exposure to takeaways in England. *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 23(1), 24.
- 17 Rahilly, J., Williams, A., Chang, M., Cummins, S., Derbyshire, D., Hassan, S., **Huang, Y.**, Keeble, M., Liu, B., Medina-Lara, A., et al. (2024). Changes in the number and outcome of takeaway food outlet planning applications in response to adoption of management zones around schools in England: A time series analysis. *Health & Place*, 87, 103237.
- 18 Rahilly, J., Amies-Cull, B., Chang, M., Cummins, S., Derbyshire, D., Hassan, S., **Huang, Y.**, Keeble, M., Liu, B., Medina-Lara, A., et al. (2024). Changes in the number of new takeaway food outlets associated with adoption of management zones around schools: A natural experimental evaluation in England. *SSM - Population Health*, 26, 101646.
- 19 **Huang, Y.**, Burgoine, T., Bishop, T. R., & Adams, J. (2024). Assessing the healthiness of menus of all out-of-home food outlets and its socioeconomic patterns in Great Britain. *Health & Place*, 85, 103146.
- 20 Hoenink, J. C., **Huang, Y.**, Keeble, M., Mackenbach, J. D., Pinho, M. G., Burgoine, T., & Adams, J. (2023). Socioeconomic distribution of food outlet availability through online food delivery services in seven European countries: A cross-sectional study. *Health & Place*, 84, 103135.

- 21 Karreman, N., **Huang, Y.**, Egan, N., Carters-White, L., Hawkins, B., Adams, J., & White, M. (2023). Understanding the role of the state in dietary public health policymaking: A critical scoping review. *Health Promotion International*, 38(5), daad100.
- 22 **Huang, Y.**, Burgoine, T., Theis, D. R., & Adams, J. (2022). Differences in energy and nutrient content of menu items served by large chain restaurants in the USA and the UK in 2018. *Public Health Nutrition*, 25(10), 2671–2679.
- 23 **Huang, Y.**, Burgoine, T., Essman, M., Theis, D. R., Bishop, T. R., & Adams, J. (2022). Monitoring the nutrient composition of food prepared out-of-home in the United Kingdom: Database development and case study. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 8(9), e39033.
- 24 **Huang, Y.**, Theis, D. R., Burgoine, T., & Adams, J. (2021). Trends in energy and nutrient content of menu items served by large UK chain restaurants from 2018 to 2020: An observational study. *BMJ Open*, 11(12), e054804.
- 25 Nguyen, Q. C., Keralis, J. M., Dwivedi, P., Ng, A. E., Javanmardi, M., Khanna, S., **Huang, Y.**, Brunisholz, K. D., Kumar, A., & Tasdizen, T. (2021). Leveraging 31 million Google Street View images to characterize built environments and examine county health outcomes. *Public Health Reports*, 136(2), 201–211.
- 26 Huang, D., **Huang, Y.**, Adams, N., Nguyen, T. T., & Nguyen, Q. C. (2020). Twitter-characterized sentiment towards racial/ethnic minorities and cardiovascular disease (CVD) outcomes. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 7(5), 888–900.
- 27 Nguyen, Q. C., **Huang, Y.**, Kumar, A., Duan, H., Keralis, J. M., Dwivedi, P., Meng, H.-W., Brunisholz, K. D., Jay, J., Javanmardi, M., et al. (2020). Using 164 million Google Street View images to derive built environment predictors of COVID-19 cases. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(17), 6359.
- 28 Huang, D., **Huang, Y.**, Khanna, S., Dwivedi, P., Slopen, N., Green, K. M., He, X., Puett, R., Nguyen, Q., et al. (2020). Twitter-derived social neighborhood characteristics and individual-level cardiometabolic outcomes: Cross-sectional study in a nationally representative sample. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 6(3), e17969.
- 29 Surkan, P. J., Wang, R., **Huang, Y.**, Stall, R., Plankey, M., Teplin, L. A., Wight, R. G., Jacobson, L. P., & Abraham, A. G. (2020). Victimization in early adolescence, stress, and depressive symptoms among aging sexual minority men: Findings from the multicenter AIDS cohort study. *LGBT Health*, 7(3), 155–165.
- 30 Abt, N. B., Zhao, J., **Huang, Y.**, & Eghrari, A. O. (2019). Prognostic factors and survival for malignant conjunctival melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma over four decades. *American Journal of Otolaryngology*, 40(4), 577–582.
- 31 Nguyen, Q. C., Khanna, S., Dwivedi, P., Huang, D., **Huang, Y.**, Tasdizen, T., Brunisholz, K. D., Li, F., Gorman, W., Nguyen, T. T., et al. (2019). Using Google Street View to examine associations between built environment characteristics and US health outcomes. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 14, 100859.
- 32 **Huang, Y.**, Huang, D., & Nguyen, Q. C. (2019). Census tract food tweets and chronic disease outcomes in the US, 2015–2018. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(6), 975.
- 33 Chen, B., Shao, J., Liu, K., Cai, G., Jiang, Z., **Huang, Y.**, Gu, H., & Jiang, J. (2018). Does eating chicken feet with pickled peppers cause avian influenza? Observational case study on Chinese social media during the avian influenza A (H7N9) outbreak. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 4(1), e8198.
- 34 Hwang, J., Byrd, K., Nguyen, M. O., Liu, M., **Huang, Y.**, & Bae, G. H. (2017). Gender and ethnic diversity in academic PM&R faculty: National trend analysis of two decades. *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*, 96(8), 593–595.

Oral Presentations

May 2026 *Third Thursday Seminars, The University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, United States*
From warning labels to healthy checkout: policy approaches to improve the food environment in the US

April 2026 *Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM), Chicago, United States*
Effects of added-sugar warning labels on restaurant menus: a randomized controlled trial

April 2026 *The Healthy Eating & Food Policy Research Annual Meeting, Chicago, United States*
Effect of a mandatory healthy checkout policy on the retail food environment: A natural experimental evaluation

March 2026 *Talking Public Health, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, United States*
Building a healthy food environment to improve population diets

Jul 2024 (Invited talk) *Food Active Bi-annual Network Meeting, Health Equalities Group, United Kingdom*
3rd Party Delivery Companies and Dark Kitchens Workshop

Jul 2024 *International Medical Geography Symposium (IMGS), Atlanta, United States*

Understanding the socio-spatial distribution of "dark retail" in England: developing a unique location dataset

Jan 2024 (Invited talk) *Division of Chronic Disease Research Across the Lifecourse (CoRAL), Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, Boston, United States*

Menu healthiness, out-of-home food consumption, and dietary quality

Sep 2023 *Society for Social Medicine & Population Health Annual Conference, Newcastle, United Kingdom*

Incorporating menu healthiness into the out-of-home food environment and exploring associations with dietary behaviour and quality: a multiverse analysis

Jun 2023 *International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA), Uppsala, Sweden*

Characterising the out-of-home food environment using big data sources

Jun 2022 *International Medical Geography Symposium (IMGS), Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

Collating online nutritional information to monitor restaurant menu items in the UK: the MenuTracker Database

Jan 2022 *Cambridge Global Food Security Coffee Break Seminars, Cambridge, United Kingdom*

Tracking restaurant menu items in the UK: energy and nutrient trends

Oct 2021 *MRC Epidemiology Unit Work-in-Progress (WIP) seminars, Cambridge, United Kingdom*

Tracking restaurant menu items: using MenuTracker data to evaluate energy and nutrient trends of restaurant menu items in the UK

Sep 2021 *Society for Social Medicine & Population Health Annual Conference, Virtual*

Energy and nutrient trends of menu items served by large UK chain restaurants, 2018 -2020

Jun 2021 *MRC Epidemiology Unit Population Health Interventions Meeting, Cambridge, United Kingdom*

Leveraging web scraping to automate data collection in public health research

Skills and Certifications

- **Programming:** Python, R, SAS (advanced programmer, certified), SQL, STATA, HTML, CSS, jQuery
- **Statistical Analysis:** Longitudinal/Multilevel, Survival, Interrupted Time Series, Causal Inference, Spatial Analysis
- **Computer Science:** Web Scraping, Machine Learning, Deep Learning in TensorFlow (certified), Web Development