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PaperTitle **Ernest Newbury Memorial Lecture: Nutrition and Nutritionists:
Whose Opinions Can we Trust?**

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ABSTRACT

The academic study of human nutrition is a comparatively new one; the first department of human nutrition in the UK was not established until after the Second World War. It was the poor relation of animal nutrition, which had a firm commercial basis and dietetics with its roots in medicine. The term “Nutritionist”, unlike that of dietician, is not protected in the UK hence anyone whether academically or professionally qualified can call themselves a nutritionist. Many well known authors who call themselves nutritionists but have no academic or professional probity gain their popularity and credibility through their unquestionable communication skills. The general public regard medical doctors as being a reliable source of information about nutrition even though their training is often woefully deficient in it and the media are similarly hamstrung in knowing whom to trust. I have suggested that there is a hierarchy of information to which those with an interest in the subject can turn. But until “Human Nutrition” becomes a legitimate protected professional designation anyone can describe themselves as a “Nutritionist” as Dr Ben Goldacre, a popular British newspaper columnist, has established by registering his cat as one.