

Nicole M. Gatto, MPH, PhD

I am currently a Principal Collaborative Scientist at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute where I use real world data in epidemiologic studies of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the Adult Changes in Thought (ACT) Study. I have affiliate faculty appointments with the Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine, USC and UC Riverside. I earned my MPH from the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA and my PhD in Epidemiology from the Department of Preventive Medicine at USC's Keck School of Medicine. Subsequently I completed a three-year post-doctoral fellowship at UCLA in environmental neuroepidemiology as well as a one-year internship in communicable disease control and prevention at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. I hold certifications in Public Health (CPH), SAS, Geographical Information Science (GIS), and college teaching. My research focuses on environmental, occupational, lifestyle and genetic risk and protective factors for cardiovascular and neurological diseases, specifically Parkinson's disease as well as cognitive impairment and dementia.

In 2009, I co-founded the Milagro Allegro Community Garden, a vibrant and thriving community space that integrates urban farming, art and education in the Highland Park neighborhood of Northeast Los Angeles. In 2010, inspired by Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign, with colleagues I developed LA Sprouts, a nutrition/cooking and gardening intervention aimed at reducing the risk of childhood obesity in predominantly Latino elementary school aged children. During 2012-17, I led the evaluation of the Little Green Fingers project, which constructed eight community gardens across Los Angeles County.

In 2014, I was a recipient of the Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award, California's highest environmental honor. In 2020, I was named a Fulbright Scholar and, during 2021, I taught and conducted research at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik, Iceland. I am also a three-time Fulbright Specialist completing research and teaching projects in the countries of Mongolia, Colombia and Kazakhstan between 2018 - 2025.

I am a member of professional societies including the American Public Health Association and the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology. I serve as a reviewer for prominent public health journals including Environmental Health Perspectives, Journal of the Neurological Sciences, and Public Health Nutrition and have served as guest editor for the journals Vaccines and Brain Sciences.

I am a native Angeleno inspired by the work of Wangari Maathai who founded the Green Belt movement in Kenya, and Alice Waters who created the Edible Schoolyard in Berkeley, CA.

