

The 3rd International Immunonutrition Workshop was held at Platja D'Aro, Girona, Spain on 21–24 October, 2009

## 3rd International Immunonutrition Workshop

### Immunonutrition: an international emerging task force

What is the interest of this issue?

After six International Courses on Immunonutrition conducted in Spain I felt it was time to organise an event at which all researchers working in this field could share their results and have the opportunity not only to present them, but also to discuss them with other professionals. Thus, in 2007 not only the 7th International Course on Immunonutrition, but also the 1st International Immunonutrition Workshop were held in Valencia (Spain) and the presentations published in 2007 in the *British Journal of Nutrition* (98, Suppl. 1). In this workshop the group of researchers (listed at the end of the article) who had participated previously in the Immunonutrition courses made the decision to create the international Forum on Immunonutrition for Education and Research (i-FINER). The objective of i-FINER is to promote education and research in the transdisciplinary area that comprises the interaction between nutrition and immunology, through the advancement of its understanding, as well as through the publication and communication of its results. The mission is to provide conditions for expanding formation of human resources on immunonutrition, specifically concerning education and research. The vision is to develop a long-term task force to yield a novel vision of nutrition and immunological requirements for a healthy policy, including governmental policies.

On this basis, the 3rd International Immunonutrition Workshop was held in October 2009. Thirty-nine presentations were exposed and focused on three main topics: (1) the role of nutrients and bioactive compounds in the immune system; (2) the bidirectional relationship between nutrition and immunity in different physiological states; (3) the application of immunonutrition in pathological situations.

The workshop was attended by 202 participants from twenty-nine countries worldwide: Africa (Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria); America (Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, USA); Asia (India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Thailand); Europe (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, UK); Oceania (Australia).

The relatively small group of participants allowed lively discussion of the presentations (39), oral communications (28) and posters (81) in a warm and enthusiastic atmosphere in a spectacular four-star coastal resort overlooking two of the most beautiful coves in the area (Platja d'Aro, Girona, Spain).

The aim of publishing some selected presentations in this issue of the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* has been to highlight the most relevant research that is being undertaken in the field of immunonutrition.

I would like to emphasise the interest in the knowledge of immunonutrition, since through its understanding quality of life and life expectancy may be enhanced. Thus, the actual role of many nutrients and bioactive compounds is still to be elucidated under both physiological and pathological conditions. Scientific evidence has to be strictly defined to guarantee the establishment of 'functionality' of functional foods. Not only the daily doses of ingredients within foods or diets but also the period of time on a specified intake has to be defined.

However, it should not be forgotten that diet is a part of our lifestyle. Thus, it is important also to take into account other contributing factors, such as physical activity and idiosyncratic psychological conditions. Thus, stress is a multifactor that affects not only psyches, but also eating behaviours and the mood to undertake a certain type of physical activity or live a sedentary life. It is not surprising that chronic pathologies-related inflammatory processes (obesity, CVD, type 2 diabetes, neurological disorders) are acquiring considerable interest as a result of their incidence worldwide, all of which have a basis in inadequate food behaviour, inappropriate physical activity and stress disturbance.

Nevertheless, research is not an area restricted only to academics, as already discussed by Professor Ricardo Uauy in the proceedings of the 1st International Immunonutrition Workshop: 'Academics need to be aware of the ethics and the pitfalls in the interaction with industry; conversely industry has to define its role in the process of bringing new knowledge to useful products. The process needs to be interactive, transparent and clearly place public interest above all other considerations.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, the participation of several industries, such as Abbott, Bayer, Coca-Cola, Danone, Puleva, Centro de Información Cerveza y Salud (Information Centre on Beer and Health), Central Lechera Asturiana, Mead Johnson, Merck, Kellogg's, Rafer, Zespri and one Association (Asociación de Celíacos de Madrid, Association of Coeliacs of Madrid) was very welcome and appreciated.

Finally, I very much appreciate the enthusiasm and involvement of the scientific and local committees in sharing with me the interest in developing this exciting field of immunonutrition.

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**Reference**

1. Uauy R (2007) *Br J Nutr* **98**, Suppl. 1, S17–S23.

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