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New insights into the impact of the intestinal microbiota on health and disease: a symposium report
Linda V. Thomas and Theo Ockhuizen

Aims and Scope

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**New insights into the impact of the intestinal microbiota on health and disease:
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Preface and Acknowledgements

The International Yakult symposium (*The Gut and Its Role in Health Maintenance*) was held in Vienna, Austria from 26–27th May, 2011. It focussed on the gut and its commensal microbiota, exploring different aspects of how this internal ecosystem influences health and disease.

As well as providing a unique opportunity for high level scientific debate, the symposium provided a platform for scientists to review and discuss the latest findings relevant to this research area: from fundamental aspects such as analysis of the intestinal microbiota to clinical trials involving probiotic intervention. In particular, developments in molecular analysis techniques and improvements in trial design have helped to achieve recent significant advances in the scientific understanding of the relationship between the gut, its microbiota and health. These and other topics were discussed during the meeting.

This report reflects the content of the symposium; all the presenters reviewed and agreed this report.

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Dr Tomoyuki Sako
On behalf of the Symposium Scientific Committee