

Introduction: First International Immunonutrition Workshop

In 1840 Simon defined the high incidence of infectious processes in malnourished populations, especially in children. However, it was not until the end of the 1950s that the interactions between nutrition and infection were fully recognised as a result of the well known review by Scrimshaw, Taylor and Gordon. Since then, there has been an expansion of interest in the wider range of interrelationships in this field, where not only infection but also tissue injury and inflammation play a role in modifying nutritional status. This supplement contains 25 articles, which have been presented at the 1st International Immunonutrition Workshop, held in Valencia from the 3rd–5th October 2007, as a part of the 7th International Course on Immunonutrition, which one of us (AM) has organized in 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005. This event was planned in order to both update knowledge in this area and to encourage researchers to consider the potential role of immunonutrition in their scientific studies. It also afforded new researchers and post-graduate students the opportunity to openly discuss their results with distinguished experts in this field. This event was organized by the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas – Spanish National Research Council) in collaboration with ainia Technology Centre.

The CSIC is the largest public research body in Spain. Located throughout the country, it plays an active role in scientific policy development in all the autonomous regions. On the 11th January 1907, the Council for the Extension of Studies and Scientific Research [“Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas” (the JAE)] was created by the Ministry for Public Instruction and Fine Arts. In 1939, out of the JAE, the CSIC was created. As a multi-disciplinary body, the CSIC covers all fields of knowledge (organised into eight scientific and technical areas), from basic research to advanced technological development.

ainia is a private Spanish, non-profit making association made up of business people in the agri-food industry and other related sectors. It was created in 1987 by these business people and by the Institute for Small and Medium-sized Industry from Valencia (IMPIVA). ainia has 1700 member companies.

Due to the relevance of its subject material and the scientific quality, The Nutrition Society, The Spanish Society of Nutrition (Sociedad Española de Nutrición (SEN)), and The Argentinean Society of Clinical Research [Sociedad Argentina de Investigación Clínica (SAIC)] supported the workshop. University credits were awarded by the Polytechnic University of Valencia.

The papers that follow reflect the topics of most interest within the field of immunonutrition. After four very interesting and wide ranging introductory reviews, three papers deal with the role played by micronutrients in the immune system, three more papers discuss the effect of fatty acids and olive oil, ten papers discuss the effects of bioactive compounds and functional ingredients such as dietary

microparticles nucleotides, gangliosides oligosaccharides, bovine milk concentrates, prebiotics, probiotics in different situations, one paper deals with interactions of alcohol and the immune system, two papers discuss the inflammatory process in obesity, and finally three papers discuss the role of immunonutrition in patients under pathological circumstances (cancer, surgery and critically illness, and AIDS). Together these papers comprise an excellent overview of the field of immunonutrition.

This supplement has been funded by Diputación Provincial de Jaén, and several commercial organisations including Bayer, Abbott, Danone, Puleva, Orafiti, Ordesa, Coca-Cola and Vegenat. We thank these organisations for their support of this publication.

We are also indebted to the Immunonutrition Research Group of the Department of Metabolism and Nutrition of Instituto Frío from CSIC, Madrid (Esther Nova, Sonia Gómez, Javier Romeo, Ligia Esperanza Díaz, M^a Angeles Puertollano, Tamara Pozo, David Martínez, Belén Zapatera and Loreto Aldunate) for their constant support, and to the technical secretariat, led by Carmen Serrano and her assistant Paz Seligra, for their enthusiasm and dedication to making all the necessary arrangements.

Special acknowledgements are given to the editorial work supporting this supplement especially to Julia Wärnberg, scientific secretary of the workshop and associate guest editor of this supplement and to Emma Patterson who assisted with the editing.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest acknowledgement to the Honorary President, the Scientific and Organizing Committees, the speakers, and the participants, who have provided encouragement for organizing future Workshops of this kind.

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