

Carbohydrates: Continuing controversies

Session Description:

Until relatively recently research and recommendations relating to macronutrients have focused principally on protein and fat. Carbohydrates have been seen as providing the balance of energy requirements after establishing the optimal intakes of protein and fat and carbohydrate-containing foods, a potentially useful vehicle for some micronutrients. More recently there has been interest in the nutritional properties of carbohydrates, especially the potential health benefits of some polysaccharides (notably slowly digested starches, nonstarch polysaccharides and oligosaccharides) and the potentially deleterious effects of sugars and high intakes of total carbohydrate. Most national and international nutritional recommendations for the maintenance of good health, disease prevention or management of certain diseases include advice regarding carbohydrates and this proposed Symposium covers some of the topics relating to carbohydrates surrounding which some controversies remain.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Symposium is to provide an up-to-date review of some of the topical and controversial issues associated with carbohydrate nutrition. Most of these were considered during the FAO/WHO Scientific Update (published in the EJCN: Ref: Joint FAO/WHO Scientific Update on Carbohydrates in Human Nutrition. C Nishida, F Martinez Nocito, Jim Mann (Eds) *Eur J Clin Nutr.* 2007; **61**(Suppl 1): S1-S137) but further information has become available since then. Arguably the most important recent development has been the 2008 debate relating to the CODEX definition of dietary fiber.

Outcomes:

It is intended that the topics be covered in sufficient depth to enable participants to acquire informed opinions regarding each of the issues discussed.

Session Chair:

Dr Chizuru Nishida, WHO (Geneva), Switzerland

Session Topics and Speakers:

Topic 1: *Are classification and definition of carbohydrates important to human health?*

Speaker: Professor John Cummings, United Kingdom

Topic 2: *Does choice of carbohydrate-containing foods influence the risk of chronic diseases?*

Speaker: Professor Jim Mann, New Zealand

Topic 3: *How do we select the most appropriate carbohydrate-containing foods?*

Speaker: Professor Este Vorster, South Africa

Topic 4: *Does altering the nature of carbohydrate influence gene expression?*

Speaker: Professor Matti Uusitupa, Finland