

PRESS RELEASE

PREVENTING OBESITY TRANSMISSION DURING PREGNANCY

Brussels, 12 February 2013 – A much neglected part of the obesity epidemic is that it has resulted in more overweight/obese women before and during pregnancy. Their offspring also tend to have higher birth weights and more body fat, and carry an increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases later in life. However, the nutritional factors and mechanisms involved pre and during pregnancy that may influence child obesity remain uncertain. A recent publication by ILSI Europe identifies and discusses key contributing factors leading to obesity.

In an article recently published in *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism*, potential key contributors to obesity, including nutrition, during and after pregnancy were identified. Prenatal factors may include maternal diet, gestational weight gain and metabolic perturbations during pregnancy. Postnatal diet and feeding practices along with activity patterns and family lifestyle may also modify or determine the long-term health risks.

A majority of clinical studies have examined maternal dietary information in isolation. Combining the large number of current maternal and infant studies and including analysis of both sets of nutritional data would be a great step forward. The publication indicates that *“this introduces the challenge of how to unify the findings made, as each study varies considerably in the breadth and depth of dietary data collected”*.

In addition, with regard to gestational weight gain, Prof Michael Symonds, University of Nottingham, UK highlighted that it *“should not be used on its own but in a larger context. It should be complemented by measures of body composition, metabolic and endocrine responses in the mother and offspring”*. Better knowledge of these contributors and the mechanisms involved could result in more targeted nutritional advice to women, especially those that are obese, to improve nutrition and health status before, during or after pregnancy. It is vitally important to prevent (the development of) excess fat mass to both the mother’s own, and their infant’s future health.

The publication summarises the conclusions of a workshop organised by the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Europe in October 2011. This work has been commissioned by the Metabolic Imprinting Task Force of ILSI Europe.

To read the publication, click [here](#).

Information for the Media

If you would like further information about Session 1 of the International Symposium on Food Packaging – Scientific Developments Supporting Safety and Innovation, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Abstracts of the presentations are available on request, and in some cases we will be able to distribute the actual presentations that were delivered during the symposium. Interviews with the speakers can also be arranged.

ILSI Europe's Mission

ILSI Europe fosters collaboration among the best scientists from industry, academic and public sectors to provide evidence-based scientific consensus on nutrition and food safety leading to the improvement of public health.

Core Values

ILSI Europe's core values guide the organisation in all activities designed to achieve its mission.

Public Benefit All scientific activities have a public purpose and benefit.

Collaboration Scientists from many sectors of society – public and private – can best address complex science and health issues by sharing their unique knowledge and perspectives.

Transparency All scientific activities are conducted in an open and transparent manner and all scientific outcomes are made available to the public to ensure confidence in the integrity of the process and outcomes.