Metabolic Issues of Clinical Nutrition

Editors
Simon P. Allison, Nottingham, UK
Vay Liang W. Go, Los Angeles, Calif., USA
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Preface

In devising this program with our Nestlé colleagues we have attempted not only to review some of the new developments and pressing problems in clinical nutrition and metabolism, but also to develop some unifying themes running across the nutritional spectrum, from undernutrition to obesity, and from starvation and weight loss to acute medical and surgical illness. Recurring issues such as insulin resistance, changes in intermediary metabolism, fluid and electrolyte physiology, and genetic and non-genetic inheritance are highlighted, as is the biological paradox linking maternal undernutrition to the development of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in later life, a phenomenon that may persist through several subsequent generations by mechanisms still poorly understood. This creates problems not only for the developed world, but also for nations that have experienced the combination of undernutrition (present or previous) and rapid urbanization and its associated changes in lifestyle. Asian countries, including India and China, follow in the wake of Europe and the USA, with rapid rises in the prevalence of obesity and type-2 diabetes that are now reaching epidemic proportions. The implications for current and future health policy and costs are enormous. A nihilistic or ostrich policy is inappropriate and a recipe for disaster.

It seems extraordinary to us that while these medical problems of over- and undernutrition are now surpassing infectious diseases in terms of prevalence, most doctors are largely ignorant of nutritional medicine and the undergraduate medical curriculum pays it scant attention.

Practical issues of policy and management are reviewed. Thailand has made remarkable strides to reduce childhood malnutrition by taking direct local action even before there is any improvement in poverty levels. This calls into question the concept that reduction in poverty, though highly desirable, is a necessary prerequisite for reducing malnutrition. This Workshop also addresses some of the ways that diet and lifestyle can be effectively modified to counteract obesity. Without national political and educational programs, however, the efforts of health care professionals will be insufficient. This Workshop underscores the diversity of topics, ideas, and opinions expressed during the 3 enjoyable days in Bangkok, and will enhance current and future
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research and public health and policy issues as we continue to gain new knowledge in the metabolic basis for the practice of clinical nutrition.

It has been a privilege to chair and participate in this Workshop of distinguished colleagues, to whom we express our thanks for their lively and interesting contributions. We also wish to express our thanks to our colleagues at Nestlé for their splendid organization and support.

Simon P. Allison and Vay Liang W. Go
Foreword

For this 9th Nestlé Nutrition Workshop of the Clinical and Performance Program, which took place in November 2003 in Bangkok, the topic ‘Metabolic Issues of Clinical Nutrition’ was chosen.

In the field of clinical nutrition we are aware of factors which may play a role in the assessment of the patients’ needs. Malnutrition and overweight, insulin resistance, blood pressure, the fluid and electrolyte state, interactions between diet, the individual’s genetic background, hormonal and immunological factors as well as the degree of possible physical activity may be taken into individual consideration.

I would like to thank the chairmen, Prof. Simon Allison and Prof. Vay Liang Go, who are well-known experts in the metabolic factors of clinical nutrition, for putting the program together and inviting as speakers the opinion leaders in different fields in order to discuss the interrelationships between the factors mentioned above. Physicians invited from 12 countries contributed to the discussions that are published in this book. Mrs. Vipapan Panitantum and her team from Nestlé Thailand provided all logistical support, so that participants gained an appreciation of Thai hospitality. Dr. Philippe Steenhout from Nestlé’s Nutrition Strategic Business Division in Lausanne, Switzerland, was responsible for the scientific coordination. His cooperation with the chairpersons was essential for the success of this workshop.

Prof. Wolf Endres, MD
Vice-President
Nestec Ltd., Lausanne, Switzerland