

Report on American Academy of Microbiology Colloquium on Probiotic Microbes Submitted by Gregor Reid

The American Academy of Microbiology hosted a colloquium on **Probiotic Microbes** on November 5-7 in Baltimore Maryland. ISAPP was one of the sponsors of this event and Dr. Gregor Reid represented the organization in the invitation-only workshop. The event was the idea of Dr. John Cebra from the University of Pennsylvania, but sadly he succumbed to cancer in October, 2005. His legacy was highlighted at the meeting.

The attendees were:

Dr. John Bienenstock, McMaster University, Canada
Dr. Michael Blaut, German Institute of Human Nutrition PostdamRehbruecke, Germany
Dr. Nico Bos, University of Groningen, Netherlands
Dr. Rachel Buck, Abbott Laboratories, Columbus, USA
Dr. John Butler, University of Iowa, USA
Dr. Simon Carding, The University of Leeds, UK
Dr. Richard Darveau, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
Dr. Mildred Donlan, Biological Warfare Defense, USA
Dr. Joel Dore, INRA, France
Dr. Chuck Elson, University of Alabama, USA
Dr. Miguel Freitas, Danone, USA
Dr. Rex Gaskins, University of Illinois, USA
Dr. Andrew Gerwitz, Emory University, USA
Dr. Jeff Gordon, Washington University, St. Louis, USA
Dr. Pat Holt, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth, Australia
Dr. Jane Leedle, Consultant, USA
Dr. Rod Mackie, University of Illinois, USA
Dr. Andrew Macpherson, McMaster University, Canada
Dr. Karen Madsen, University of Alberta, Canada
Dr. Annick Mercenier, Nestle Research Center, Switzerland
Dr. Tore Midvedt, Karolinska Institute, Sweden
Dr. Arthur Ouwehand, Danisco, Denmark
Dr. Eyal Raz, University of California, San Diego, USA
Dr. Gregor Reid, ISAPP, USA, Canadian R&D Centre for Probiotics, London, Canada
Dr. Jennifer Ross, FDA, USA
Dr. Kirsten Rusch, Private Practitioner, Herborn, Germany
Dr. Volker Rusch, Institute of Microecology, Herborn, Germany
Dr. Tomoyuki Sako, Yakult Institute, Tokyo, Japan
Dr. Abigail Salyers, University of Illinois, USA
Dr. Gerald Tannock, University of Otago, New Zealand
Dr. Helena Tlaskalova-Hogenova, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague
Dr. Leda Viera, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil
Dr. Allan Walker, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA
Dr. Richard Walker, FDA, USA
Dr. Jeffrey Weiser, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA
Dr. Carol Wells, University of Minnesota, USA
Dr. Agnes Wold, Goteborg University, Sweden
Dr. Kurt Zimmerman, Institute of Microecology, Germany

Format and outcomes

Following some introductory presentations, the participants were split into three groups and asked to address a number of questions:

1. What are the consequences of normal flora acquisition?
2. What are the advantages to microflora manipulation?
3. What are the likely mechanisms for beneficial host-microbe interactions?
4. What are the likely mechanisms for beneficial microbe-microbe interactions?
5. Can we rationally identify probiotic candidates?
6. Regulatory issues.

A full report of the meeting will be written and made available on the web and in written form in around 6 month's time. It would be improper for me to publish a summary of the meeting ahead of the formal report, but in relation to ISAPP, the following comments representing my perceptions, may be of interest.

- The workshop format was excellent, and ISAPP's model of having experts discuss issues and interact closely, was proven again here to be an excellent means of running a workshop.
- The FAO/WHO definition of probiotics was upheld by the AAM, albeit after some discussion.
- Hot topics included creation and clinical use of recombinant strains; manipulation of the microbiota at birth compared to adulthood; a major need for clinical trials and condition-specific probiotics; use of genomics, proteomics and metabolomics to decipher the impact of probiotics (and prebiotics) on humans; and concerns over regulatory bureaucracy, pace, lack of guidelines and failure to properly adjudicate the area.

In summary, I believe this was an excellent forum for ISAPP to be represented. As seen from the list of participants, we did have good representation from people who have actively contributed to ISAPP in the past. Notably, the colloquium identified a number of others who should either be considered for participation in Coleraine, or who in time will become major contributors to probiotic and prebiotic research.

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