



Nutrition and therapy: sodium intake is not only dangerous

*Prof. Salim Yusuf, one of the world's top cardiologist opened the Pre-Symposium "The multifaceted aspects of cardiovascular prevention: from nutrition to therapy" with an unrestricted grant by Fondazione Internazionale Menarini, in Lisbon. The meeting was held on the opening day of the **86th Congress of the European Atherosclerosis Society***

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) continue to be the major cause of death in the developed countries. Moreover, the cardiovascular risk factors leading towards the development of CVD are on the rise. The current preventive and therapeutic management, centred on the control of traditional risk factors, is clearly not enough to stop this pandemic. Therefore, the search for new biomarkers in CVD is a priority in most clinical research programs.

For this reason a faculty of international clinicians and specialists met in the Pre-Symposium, chaired by **Prof. Alberico L. Catapano**, that was held at Centro de Congressos in Lisbon, on May 5, 2018, with an unrestricted grant by Fondazione Internazionale Menarini. They carried their baggage of knowledge, the results of decades in studies and researches, their experiential effort toward the state of the atherosclerosis and its CV prevention.

"The reason for starting with this preliminary congress to the meeting was related to the wide spectrum of prevention and CV diseases, addressed by the Scientific Panel at the Pre-Symposium and which are the central topics and the mission of Eas", Professor Catapano, Past President Eas, said.

The Pre-Symposium, which opened for all Congress participants to attend, explored many specific aspects connected with nutrition: the relationships between different eating habits and CV disease; the protective effect of the Mediterranean diet against atherosclerosis from a molecular and biochemical point of view; the effects of saturated versus monounsaturated fat on health; the nutritional advice in daily practice and the pyramid of the Mediterranean diet; the role of microbiota and lifestyle; the lipid-modifying effects of nutraceuticals.

The Mediterranean Diet is arguably the best-studied and most evidence-based diet to prevent not only cardiovascular disease but also other chronic diseases, as it has become the standard for healthy eating and a dietary template of particular value. One of the better aspects is the use of monounsaturated fats such as olive oil instead of saturated fats. However, it is not only one food but the Mediterranean diet as a whole – which includes the combination of all the different foods along with the lifestyle and eating pattern that goes with it – that provides the heart health benefit.

From an epidemiological point of view, the first lecture by **Salim Yusuf, Professor at McMaster University**, showed how sodium is an essential for various functions within the body and homeostasis. "Our data don't contradict that there is an association between salt and blood pressure, but at the same time sodium is an essential nutrient". He compared sodium to vitamins: "we know that supplementing vitamins well beyond an appropriate danger does no good and may even do harm. Equally, low levels of vitamins cause disease and so there is an optimal range for

most nutrients that are key to normal physiology. In the same way, moderate sodium intake (3 to 5 g/day) is optimal", Prof. Yusuf said.

Practising clinicians were so updated on the most advances and were given the opportunity to interact with the leader investigators in this field.

"This Pre-Symposium - Professor Catapano, said- confirmed that there are new therapeutic perspectives emerging for the different pathologies, with which clinicians have to confront. New perspectives that will certainly facilitate the therapeutic approach of diseases that are sometimes really difficult to treat. The evidence in this area needs to be adequately communicated to health professionals and the general public. Diet is the cornerstone of CVD prevention as well as overall health promotion".

"We have to go again to school - Professor **Alberto Mello e Silva, co-chair of the meeting and Professor of the Hospital da Luz Clínica da Amadora**, said - We have to revised many years of studies and theories and also in different perspectives; Mandelian randomization is another added value for example, a new way to see the studies. There is a task between European societies of cardiology and atherosclerosis trying to see in a different way the risk scores. There is an important message from this Pre-Symposium: the relationship between MD and CV prevention is very important, but we have to adapt to each country because it's not easy to apply MD sometimes outside from the Mediterranean sea. It's expensive, but we must convinced the politicians that is important, so in the long time what is more expensive today, it will be less expensive tomorrow. This will be a great achievement from a social, economic, but also clinical point of view for prevention against CV disease".

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