



“Food: a drug between the drugs” Turin, July 10-12, 2014

CONCLUDING REMARK

The main elements capable of determining the success of a scientific congress are obviously related to the programme, the quality of the speakers, and the interest aroused in the participants.

Nevertheless, the true success of a scientific event lies in the creation of a solid cultural platform such as a multidisciplinary infrastructure for the growth of the scientific community and for providing scientific-informative communication which is clear and effective.

In my capacity as careful observer and keen learner, I must stress how the congress in Turin organised by the Department of Science and Technology of Pharmaceutical products and the Fondazione Internazionale Menarini was the perfect occasion for offering authoritative scientific information at which physicians, pharmacists, chemists, biochemists, biologists and also other specialists, provided a detailed panorama of the possible food-drug interactions as well as the role of nutraceuticals.

The close relationship linking nutrition, care and health has been known about since ancient times and in 400 BC Hippocrates stated “let food be your medicine and let medicine be your food”. We now know that while food is able to represent a risk factor, it also plays a key role in prevention.

The correct administration of a drug must no longer ignore the patient's diet both in the case of minor diseases and also life-saving drugs and cancer treatment. Often the bioavailability of a drug, and therefore its correct dosage, depend heavily on the composition of the meal taken at the same time as the drug. In this context, the intestinal microbiota also plays a crucial role in human health, especially the immune system. When the microbiota balance is disrupted, various diseases may be triggered, including obesity, allergic conditions, inflammatory bowel disorders and serious metabolic alterations.

Therefore, in a country like Italy, where the life expectancy is second only to that of Japan, the Mediterranean culture and tradition must become a health model to be exported to the rest of the world. In addition, the high technological level of Italy's agro-industrial sector and the safety of “Made in Italy” food should increasingly more represent the driving force of our economy, for which EXPO2015 will be its greatest international showcase.

The definition “we are what we eat”, which also appeared on the cover of TIME, reflects the findings of the various work sessions of “Food: a drug between the drugs” which I'm sure will have a follow-up with further editions for offering all those who work in this sector a holistic approach to health and wellbeing on strictly scientific grounds.

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Chairman of the Congress*