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The Effect Of Diet On The Mental Performance Of Children The Nutrimenthe FP7 Project Investigates

Main Category: [Nutrition / Diet](#)  
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Article Date: 24 Apr 2008 - 0:00 PDT

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A team of leading International Scientists from top Academic Centres and Food & Biotechnology Multinational Companies, providing a critical mass of experts in the "Effect of Diet on the Mental Performance of Children" are meeting in Granada to kick start the Nutrimenthe project and participate in the Early Nutrition Programming International Symposium (22/23 April 2008).

20 Multidisciplinary Research Centres (paediatricians, neurophysiologists, psychiatrists, nutritionists) from eight European countries and the USA collaborate in the NUTRIMENTHE Project, a Large-scale Integrating Collaborative Project of the 7th European Framework Programme from the Theme "Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Biotechnologies" THEME 2[FP7-KBBE-2007-2-2-01], Grant nº 212652, and entitled "The effect of Diet on the Mental Performance of Children". This Project will offer the opportunity to advance knowledge about how early nutrition will impact on later mental performance and behaviour, from almost 120,000 children throughout the EU.

The Kick-off Meeting for this Project will take place in Granada on the 22nd April, the day before the International Symposium on Early Nutrition Programming 23rd April (<http://www.enasymposium2008.org> / <http://www.metabolic-programming.org>) at the School of Medicine of the University of Granada.

There is evidence that early nutrition can influence later mental performance, cognitive development and behaviour. The idea that the diet of mothers, infants and children could have an influence on long-term mental performance has major implications for public health practice and policy development, as well as for food product development and economic progress. NUTRIMENTHE will significantly improve this knowledge through studying the role, mechanisms, risks and benefits of specific nutrients and food components to respond to specific needs and improve the mental development of children.

The research will include quantification of the nutrient effects of early programming on later cognitive and mental disorders, and effects of food on mental state and mental performance such as mood, activation, attention, motivation, effort, perception, memory and intelligence and the effects of food on mental illness. NUTRIMENTHE will develop epidemiologic studies to analyse the long-term effects of pre- & early postnatal diet on children's mental performance & illness; and randomised clinical intervention trials with specific nutrients initiated during pregnancy, infancy & childhood. This project intends to generate more knowledge about the quantitative requirements of n-3 LC-PUFAs in children with restricted diet, and quantitative assessment of the interaction between nutrition & genetic variation with respect to mental performance. One of the more important aims of the project is to develop an appropriate standard neuropsychological battery to improve a comparable methodology for cognitive assessment in EU children. The links between diet and mental development, the influence on consumer behaviour and the impact upon public health of improving mental function through specific nutrients will be studied by the project research team.

NUTRIMENTHE will also address the key issues in mental health in European children where diet could play a role, for example, the project will asses the effects on cognition/cognitive development (perception, memory, intelligence etc.), anxiety/stress, Attention Deficit Hyper Activity (ADHD), depression and other related areas. These disorders currently have a significant cost impact on European Society through increased childcare costs and treatment.

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