



Experts will meet to discuss how diet affects behavioral development of children

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By EurekAlert

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Can diet affect our children's long-term mental and behavioural development? This question will be addressed by a number of international leading experts on child nutrition next 6th of October in York, at a public event organized within the 7th Framework Programme Nutrimenthe, entitled "Effect of diet on the mental performance of children".

The European Project Nutimenthe -funded by the European Commission through its 7th Framework Programme- is coordinated by professor Cristina Campoy Folgoso, of the University of Granada Department of Pediatrics. At the public event to be held in York, experts will discuss what is the most appropriate diet to optimise mental and behavioural development of future generations.

At present, scientists are gathering proofs to demonstrate that nutrition during pregnancy and childhood affects health, well-being and mental performance of children in the long term. A number of researches are being conducted within the project Nutrimenthe, where 250,000 children from different European countries are being observed. Shortly, the beneficial effects of long-chain polyunsaturated fat will be demonstrated, as well as the positive impact of vitamins and minerals provided as individual or multinutritional supplementation on the mental performance of children.

The following questions will be addressed at the public event to be held in October:

- Does taking folic acid during pregnancy affect foetal brain development and behaviour in children?
- How fish, and specific fatty acids, taken during pregnancy affect children's behaviour.
- Does supplementation of nursery-age children with B-vitamins affect their cognitive development?
- How protein intake (breast milk versus formula milk) during infancy affects later mental performance.
- Nature versus nurture. Does our genetic make-up affect how we process certain nutrients?
- Understanding how parents and teachers perceive that food affects mental performance of children.
- Can the long-term economic impact of improving European children's mental performance be assessed?

The public event is aimed at scholars, health professionals, consumers and the industry. Representatives of the mass media -as the BBC- will be present, and will have the opportunity to interview the coordinator of the project Nutrimenthe and some of its members.

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