Working Group 2

Evidence-based expectations across a range of benefits for probiotics: How do they compare with standard interventions?

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Orientation of the Working Group (WG) content:
The intent of the discussion group is to better understand the expectations and relevance of probiotic outcomes compared to other interventions for similar disease states, whether this concerns specific treatment modalities or broader health maintenance/risk reduction strategies. In clinical practice as well in health policies, many non-probiotic interventions are widely used, even though their effect size may be small. In order evaluate the potential of probiotics compared to standard interventions, two areas of common health concerns will be addressed: irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and respiratory tract infections (RTIs). Studies that have been part of systematic reviews (with or without meta-analysis) for overall impacts of both probiotic interventions and non-probiotic interventions will provide the starting point for exploring appropriate methodologies to evaluate how probiotics effectiveness compares to traditional interventions. (See example here.)

Meeting set-up: The WG participants will discuss overall impacts of both probiotic interventions and non-probiotic interventions on the basis of short presentations from the following invitees:

- Larry Schiller (Dallas, TX USA): Overview on the impact of IBS – a global perspective
- Peter Whorwell (Manchester, UK): Management of Functional Bowel Disorders in the daily practice (addressing various interventions including prescribed drugs, supplements like fiber & the evidence behind their usage)
- Yvan Vandenplas (Brussels, Belgium): The use of probiotics in Functional Bowel Disorders
- Andy Shane (Atlanta, GA, USA): Traditional treatments for Respiratory Tract Infections (RTIs)
- Greg Leyer (Wausau, WI USA): Effects of probiotics in colds and Influenza Like Illness
- Jeffrey Linder (Boston, USA): Preventive management of RTIs/preventive measures of drug-related side effects (in particular related to antibiotics)
- Christophe Sauce (Paris, France): Reasonable evidence-based conclusions vs small study samples/different effect sizes (the exact scope of this presentation will be decided after reception of the extended abstracts)
- Mark Ebell (Athens, GA, USA: Evidence based medicine & clinical decision making (the exact scope of this presentation will be decided after reception of the extended abstracts)

Invitees should feel free to get in touch with each other if they wish to align on similar topics.
The broad expertise from the other invitees, Michael Moore (Southampton, UK), Sarah King (Cambridge, UK), Kok Ann Gwee (Singapore) and Theo Verheij (Utrecht, NL) will further enrich the group's debate, as well as input from some industrial scientists who will participate (details not available yet). The outcomes of this WG will hopefully be published in a peer-reviewed journal and may include a proposal for a full cost effectiveness analysis. An example of a previous ISAPP WG output is attached.