

## **Report of Warnemunde Progress meeting – April 2009**

The eighth progress meeting was held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2009 at Warnemunde on the German Baltic Coast as guests of Cornelia Metges and her colleagues from the nearby Institute for the Biology of Farm Animals, Dummerstorf. We were staying in the imposing Hotel Neptune which was built in 1971 to impress the few Westerners who visited East Germany in those days. Times have certainly changed and visitors do not now have to fear that their rooms have been bugged or be trade union officials to enjoy its fantastic views down the coast. We were entertained in the evening by a local male voice choir singing German sea shanties.

Professor Koletzko welcomed everybody and reminded delegates that the next Annual Report was due very soon. He emphasised how important it was for further funding in this area of research that Earnest was seen to be effective in its use of research funds. They have put forward 3 new possible research calls to the EU which he hoped would enable fruitful collaborations established in Earnest to continue. He encouraged everybody to promote the 2010 Munich conference at every opportunity.

Anne de la Hunty described how project dissemination was progressing and showed a chart illustrating the number of publications arising out of each theme. The number of publications is growing steadily, standing at 59 abstracts, articles and reviews by the end of March. Theme 3 has been the most prolific so far as their studies have tended to be quicker to complete but other themes are expected to catch-up soon. She reminded delegates of the importance of letting her know when articles had been accepted for publication so that publicity materials could be prepared in advance.

Dr Veit Grote discussed some of the additional analyses they have done on the Childhood Obesity Project data, looking at the effect of protein intakes on fat mass using skinfolds and the associations between weight for length and IGF, branched-chain amino acids and C-peptide. The data up to 4 years of age has now been entered on the database; at 2 years 4% of the group were obese, whereas by 4 years of age this has increased to 7%. Professor Cristina Campoy briefly outlined some analyses the Granada group are doing on the NUHEAL data, looking to see the effect of DHA and folate according to the MTHFR polymorphism. Nearly half the group (45%) are heterozygous for the MTHFR mutation and 15% homozygous with 40% having the normal variant.

Marin Strom, from the Maternal Nutrition Group at Statens Serum Institut in Copenhagen, presented her work on nutrition and exercise during pregnancy and postpartum depression (PPD). PPD was assessed by either admissions for PPD or prescriptions for PPD. Those with the lowest intake of fish had an increased risk of being prescribed drugs for PPD but no increase in risk of admission; however there was no association between LCPUFA intake and either admissions or prescriptions for PPD. A reduced risk of prescriptions for PPD was seen with vigorous activity but there was no effect on admissions. However, in women who were underweight at the start of pregnancy, activity was associated with an increase in the risk of admission for PPD.

Professor Michael Symonds described some work his group have been doing on naturally small Meishan pigs looking at fat development and whether adipose tissue cell number is set early in life. Elena Martin Bautista, from Theme 4, said that 80% of the 8 months questionnaires had been returned and were currently being analysed. Maria Rodriguez (Theme 6) said that they had had to increase the number of recruitment centres to be certain of reaching their target but that they now hoped to have recruited all the subjects for their trial on oligo saccharides and immune function by September 2009.

The afternoon was set aside for individual theme meetings. This was followed by a visit to the Institute for the Biology of Farm Animals, Dummerstorf. A cross-theme training workshop on

assessing brain function and behaviour, organised by Sylvain Sebert and Cristina Campoy was held the following morning.