

Welcome & introduction -Professor Julian Mercer, Project Coordinator



I am delighted to welcome you to the first 'Full4Health' Newsletter. This is an exciting time for the project as the research gets under way in all our excellent partner laboratories and companies from across Europe. This will ensure world class research outputs related to mechanisms of hunger and satiety, thereby addressing pressing health issues such as obesity and clinically-relevant inappetence. However, alignment to key Community-wide issues such as non-communicable diseases and sustainable economic development also emphasises the importance of effective engagement with European stakeholders, including those from the food and drink industry, and public health policy. This Newsletter, to be published regularly throughout the project, will form one part of our engagement strategy, and will provide you with a clear perspective on our research goals, and our progress towards real outputs. We welcome your comments on any aspect of this project.

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Introducing the Early Stage Researchers' Group

on behalf of the ESR committee - Dr. Linda Verhagen

A forum has been created for all PhD students and post-docs involved in the project. This Early Stage Researchers (ESR) forum enables the members to share experiences, questions and even problems with scientists in the same field of interest. It will also facilitate the ESRs to get to know each other, to collaborate on joined initiatives, and to further develop training and advance their scientific career by organising workshops at annual meetings.

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View from the Project Manager

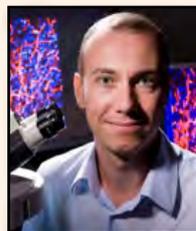
- Dr. Gabi Wagner

Full4Health has already produced a number of excellent publications and presentations during its first year. After an inspiring project meeting in Maastricht in November 2011, the team will embark into the second year of the project with a multitude of ideas for research, collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

Follow our progress online under

<http://www.full4health.eu/>

Meet the project scientist



Dr. Sebastien Bouret is a leading expert in the field of metabolic programming and the developmental neurobiology of obesity. The major focus of Dr. Bouret's laboratory is to study the development of the regulation of appetite and energy balance.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your lab?

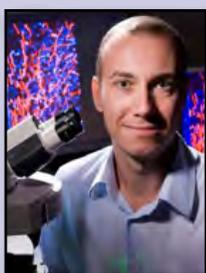
I am a research scientist at Inserm (French National Institute of Health) in Lille, France. My laboratory is studying the role of perinatal hormones and nutrition in lifelong appetite regulation. Our major research interest is to understand how very early life experiences affect brain development.

What is it about your research that particularly interests you?

The brain is the most complex organ in the human body - the seat of our intelligence but now people are beginning to realize that it is the source for so much more. Recent research has raised awareness of the brain's role in regulating how much food we eat. It is particularly fascinating to see that the ability of our brain to control hunger and appetite can also be established at the very beginning of our life.

Sebastien is the author of our first Full4 Healthnote - see overleaf for 'You are what your Mum ate?'

Full4health - News & Notes no.1



'You are what your Mum ate?'

Dr Sebastien Bouret,
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What is the problem that this research is addressing?

Women often look at pregnancy as a time for guilt-free eating. It doesn't matter how much you eat, because you're eating for two, right? Epidemiological and animal studies are finding that this is far from true. What women eat while pregnant can affect their child's health for the rest of their lives. This is particularly true for the risk of developing obesity and diabetes.

What is already known about the topic?

Childhood obesity is an alarming trend. Recent statistics estimate that 20% of children are overweight or obese in Europe. Epidemiological evidence confirms that the risk of a child developing obesity and other diseases can be related back to the mother's diet during pregnancy. Data goes all the way back to a famine in the Netherlands during World War II-Studies have shown that children born during the famine had higher rates of obesity, diabetes and other health problems. Similarly, children born to obese mothers have a much greater risk of developing obesity and diabetes in later life.

What research are you undertaking in Full4Health?

The research undertaken in the Full4Health project is exploring the reasons for this connection between early nutrition and obesity risks. Central to this goal is to understand how gut hormones (such as ghrelin) influence brain growth in a context of neonatal over nutrition. Our goal is also to understand whether alterations in nutrition just before or after birth may have long-term and potentially irreversible consequences on this important dialogue between the gut and the brain and predispose individuals to develop obesity and diabetes in later life.

What do you hope will be the major outcomes?

These studies may help us find new ways to have an impact on the obesity epidemic. Our research may provide new insight into how prenatal nutrition leads to obesity and diabetes in children, and point to new treatments for these disorders. Based on these discoveries, early intervention will probably be the key. Many key physiological processes, including brain function and appetite regulation, are established during the perinatal period - that time just prior to and soon after birth - affecting a child's entire life. By managing an optimal metabolic environment in pregnant mothers and children, we maybe able to promote a lifetime of metabolic health.