

Glycemic Response and Health

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J. Howlett, T. Hulshof, T. Wolever, J. Stowell and L. Pijls, Guest Editors

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Interest in the glycemic properties of foods and beverages is growing strongly. Around the world many foods now have their glycemic index labeled and the popular press frequently communicates about this concept to consumers. It is reported that the glycemic response to the diet can influence risk factors for disorders such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and that it might play a role in body weight management. It is important that this communication is scientifically substantiated and that consumer expectations are realistic.

The Dietary Carbohydrates Task Force of the European Branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI Europe) has investigated selected aspects of the glycemic concept in an effort to better understand the status of the science and to identify areas for future research. First an expert consultation on glycemic index methodology was commissioned. Following this a meta-analysis of human intervention studies linking glycemic response with health outcomes was undertaken. The results of this were then used as a basis for a workshop on glycemic response and health, held in Nice on 6-8 December, 2006. Participants received details of the meta-analysis in advance of the workshop in order to facilitate informed discussions. Included in this supplement are details of the meta-analysis together with a summary of the workshop, its key findings and presented papers.

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