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Programme:

Friday, Feb.11, 2011
Time: 18:15 – 18:45

Speaker:

Dr. Aiman Rahmani, FAAP

Lecture:

The Immune-Modulatory
Function of Breast Milk

THE IMMUNE-MODULATORY FUNCTION OF BREAST MILK

The immunologic activities and protective benefits of human breast milk against infection detail important concepts about the developing immunity of infants, bioactive factors and anti-inflammatory properties of breast milk, intestinal microflora in infants, probiotics and the dynamic interactive effects of breast milk on the developing infant.

In recent years, culture-dependent and -independent analyses of the bacterial diversity of human milk have revealed that this biological fluid is a source of live staphylococci, streptococci, lactic acid bacteria and enterobacteria for the infant gut. Bifidobacteria are important members of the human gut microbiota and are believed to play a beneficial role in maintaining the health of the host. They were first isolated a century ago from

infant faeces and were quickly associated with a healthy infant gut because of their predominance in breast-fed infants in comparison to formula-fed ones. Since then, it has been widely accepted that bifidobacteria represent one of the most important bacterial groups in the infant gut. Studies documenting the protective effect of breast milk against various infectious diseases in infants will be presented, including respiratory infections, diarrhoea, otitis media and infections in premature infants.

Data supports the current recommendations of a 6-month duration of exclusive breastfeeding for all infants. The evidence for the protective effect of breast milk is unequivocal. There is convincing data from both developed and developing nations, which used to encourage both increased rates of breastfeeding as well as increased duration of nursing, especially in high-risk populations.