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Programme:

Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011
Time: 10:30 – 11:00

Speaker:

Prof. Ahmed El Beledy

Lecture:

The Role of Probiotics in Supporting Immunity for Caesarean-Born Infants

THE ROLE OF PROBIOTICS IN SUPPORTING IMMUNITY FOR CAESAREAN-BORN INFANTS

The neonatal period is crucial for intestinal colonization. As the gastrointestinal tract of a foetus is near sterile, the newborn infant's gut is undergoing colonization within a few days. Infants are therefore an open field for colonization by different types of bacteria. Gestational age, type of delivery and feeding affect the gut flora of young infants.

Infants born by Caesarean section may suffer from the consequences of this type of birth process. One of these deleterious consequences is the increased risk of allergic diseases and later infections amongst Caesarean-born infants. A number of birth cohort studies have been

carried out in different countries around the world. They demonstrate the association between Caesarean delivery and an increased incidence of allergic sensitization or allergy in the first years of life. They also confirm that a Caesarean section increases the risk of gastrointestinal infections. It is believed that this difference is due to the impact of Caesarean delivery on the initial gut flora colonization of the newborn that strongly influences the development and maturation of its immune system, which we know is still immature at birth.

B. lactis supplementation in infants and young children has shown a positive clinical impact, particularly in the prevention of diseases that have a strong immune background, mainly allergy and infections.