

## Highlights from the 20th European Congress on Obesity 2013

10 January 2014

In May 2013, the 20th European Congress on Obesity, hosted by the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), took place in Liverpool. With the prevalence of obesity still on the rise, the objectives of this annual forum are to: communicate the state of the art research in the field of obesity, to foster innovative approaches for the prevention and treatment of obesity and its associated burden of diseases, and to bring together experts in the field of obesity research and management. The programme drew over 1,700 participants and covered a range of obesity-related topics. EUFIC interviewed 10 of the speakers at the conference, who summarised their research findings.

### Paul Sacher

Paul Sacher has a BSc (Medicine) and a 2-year post-graduate degree (Nutrition and dietetics) from the University of Cape Town, South Africa and a PhD in Child Health from UCL, UK. He is Honorary Senior Research Associate at University College London (UCL) Institute of Child Health, and co-founder and Research Director of MEND, the largest international community-based child weight management programme. Paul was the driving force behind the development, adaptation and evaluation of MEND's child obesity prevention and management programmes in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and the Netherlands. Paul founded the MEND International Research Group (MIRG) which has members from the USA, Singapore, Canada, UK and Australia. Paul has previously worked in the UK's National Health Service for more than 11 years and is a recognised consultant, author and expert in child weight management and health. His talk is about the MEND project.

### Chris Holmes

Following a 15-year commercial marketing career most latterly as Marketing Director for Kraft's UK confectionery business, Chris wanted to apply his skills to tackling social issues. He led the programme for the Department of Health that became Change4Life and in doing so became passionate about behavioural science which led him on to set up and run NHS London's Behavioural Insight Unit, and deliver behavioural programmes in deprived communities in Essex. He came to the conclusion that public funded behavioural programmes, although helping individuals, have neither the scale nor the continuity to social issues. But could consumer markets be a force for good? He is developing products, based on primary research, that through use change behaviour leading to better social outcomes, and generate surpluses to continue to invest in greater good. His talk is about effective and sustainable interventions.

### Theresa Marteau

Professor Theresa Marteau is Director of the Behaviour and Health Research Unit (funded by the Department of Health as the Policy Research Unit on Behaviour and Health) at the University of Cambridge. She studied Psychology at the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford. Her research

interests include: i. risk perception and communication and their weak links with behaviour change; ii. the development and evaluation of interventions to change behaviour (principally diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol consumption) to improve population health and reduce health inequalities, with a particular focus on targeting non-conscious processes; iii. the role of evidence for behaviour change in policy. Her talk is about nudging/choice architecture.

## Winifred Paulis

Winifred Paulis, Msc, is a PhD-student at the department of general practice of the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam and a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences of Sports, Health and Lifestyle in Haarlem, the Netherlands. Her PhD-research focuses on children who have overweight in primary care and aims to answer the following questions: Are children who have overweight different from children who are a healthy weight, regarding the number and type of consultations? What can a general practitioner do to help children who have overweight lose weight? What do GPs consider to be their own role in the management of childhood obesity? Her talk is about the cost-effectiveness of child obesity interventions.

## Laura Webber

Laura Webber holds a PhD in the behavioural aspects of childhood obesity from University College London and BA (Hons) in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge. She is deputy director of Modelling at the UK Health Forum. Laura's special interest is in public health modelling and her work involves building bespoke micro-simulation models to test the health impacts of risk factors such as obesity, tobacco and alcohol. She is project manager of a large study funded by European Commission on the economics of Chronic Diseases ([econdaproject.eu](http://econdaproject.eu)) and has been a consultant and expert advisor to the World Bank and World Health Organization. Her talk is about the future burden obesity and dementia.

## Pedro Teixeira

Pedro Teixeira, Ph.D. is Full Professor and director of the Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity research group at the University of Lisbon, Faculty of Human Kinetics. His research focuses on behaviour self-regulation aspects in obesity, physical activity, and eating, and on predictors of successful weight control. He has published 2 books, several book chapters, and over 60 international peer-reviewed articles. Prof. Teixeira has been an investigator in several NIH and European Commission projects, including SPOTLIGHT and EuroFIT (FP7) and the Portuguese National Weight Control Registry. He is an Associate Editor of Obesity Facts and the current President of the International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. His talk is about behaviour change and the SPOTLIGHT project.

## Julie Vandewalle

Julie Vandewalle is a PhD student at the department of Developmental, Personality and Social Psychology of Ghent University. Her research interests include the parental influence on the eating behaviour and weight status of children and adolescents. Her research especially focusses on the attachment bond

between parent and child and the influence this bond has on the emotional eating behaviour of the child. As a clinical psychologist, she also treats children, adolescents and their parents at Ghent University Child Mental Health Care. Her talk is about parental control in eating behaviour of children.

## Hermann Toplak

Hermann Toplak studied medicine and worked as postdoc at the laboratories of the Pediatric Department in Graz (Austria) and after some clinical education he went to Berne (Switzerland) where he worked as postdoc. Since 1988 he is at the Department of Internal Medicine at the Medical University of Graz. He is specialised in internal medicine and endocrinology and metabolism and became Associate Professor of Medicine in 1997. He was the chairman of the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in 2001. Since many years he is in the executive council of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and currently its President-Elect. Since 2012 he is holding a full professorship at the Medical University of Graz. His talk is about the shortcomings of the body mass index.

## Professor Jean-Michel Oppert

Jean-Michel Oppert, MD, PhD, is Professor of Nutrition at University Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris. He is immediate past president of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO). His current clinical position is Head of the Department of Nutrition, Pitié-Salpêtrière university hospital (Paris). His current research interests include the measurement of physical activity and sedentary behaviour in health and disease including obesity, the investigation of environmental determinants of physical activity and eating habits, and lifestyle and physiological changes induced by obesity surgery. He has been or is involved in EU projects centred on obesity and/or physical activity such as Nugenob, Hope, Spotlight, Alpha, Metacardis. His talk is about the pros and cons of weight loss.

## Susan Jebb

Susan Jebb has recently been appointed as Professor of Diet and Population Health in the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences at the University of Oxford. She is a nutrition scientist and her research focuses on the role of dietary factors in the prevention and management of obesity and cardiovascular risk. She is also a collaborator in the Behaviour and Health Research unit at the University of Cambridge. She has a particular interest in the translation of scientific evidence into policy and practice. Susan is a member of the Public Health England Obesity Programme Board, Chair of the Department of Health Responsibility Deal Food Network and one of the Chairs of the NICE Public Health Advisory Committees. She is also a Trustee of the Association for the Study of Obesity. Her talk is about the UK Responsibility Deal.

## For more information:

ECO2013 in Liverpool, United Kingdom: [Official congress Abstract Book](#)

ECO2011 in Istanbul, Turkey - Podcast



[ECO2012 in Lyon, France - Podcast](#)

ECO2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria - Podcast

[European Association for the Study of Obesity \(EASO\)](#)