Food and nutrition reporting in the media (ICN parallel symposium)

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The media is an important source that can influence public’s perception, attitudes and behaviours, including what people buy, eat, and believe about food. In the context of public health, journalists have an important role to play framing a story to its context. They receive information about food from different sources and stakeholders, including the universities’ press releases, scientific publications, conferences, or individual relationships. This symposium, chaired by Dr. Josephine Wills, presents a view into food safety and nutrition communication in the media through the talks of three experienced communicators in the field of food and nutrition: Marianne Smith Edge, Dr. Mary Friel and Emilio de Benito Cañizares.

Introduction to the session Food and Nutrition Reporting in the Media

Dr. Josephine Wills

Having qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in London in 1981, Jo spent several years in veterinary practice and earned her PhD from the University of Bristol Veterinary School, in 1986. After several years postdoctoral research at the University of Manchester Medical School, she joined the company Mars, where she worked in science, communication, and regulatory roles for 18 years, latterly as European Head of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs for all product categories. In January 2006, Jo was appointed to Director General of the European Food Information Council, based in Brussels. Jo has published over 100 scientific papers, edited four books and lectured extensively worldwide.

Do Media Headlines Equal Credibility and Trust? A Look at US Consumer Insights on Trusted Sources for Food & Health Information

Marianne Smith Edge

Marianne Smith Edge, MS, RD, LD, FADA is Senior Vice President, Nutrition & Food Safety for the International Food Information Council (IFIC) in Washington, and serves as IFIC’s spokesperson on various nutrition, food safety and health issues. Smith Edge is an experienced communicator, strategic planner, and facilitator with over 25 years of experience. Smith Edge’s expertise includes strategic positioning of nutritional products/services, nutrition communications, healthy aging and food allergies. She is a nationally recognized speaker in health, wellness and farm-to-table issues. Smith Edge is a past president of The Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics and received the ADA Medallion Award in 2009. Smith Edge is also a member of the Institute for Food Technologists (IFT), International Association of Food Protection and the American Public Health Association. She recently completed her second term on the USDA National Research, Extension, Education, & Economics Advisory Board, the advisory board to the Secretary of Agriculture. Smith Edge holds a Bachelor of Science degree in dietetics from the University of Kentucky.
where she was a member of the Board of Trustees (2000-06) and a master’s degree in public health-nutrition from Western Kentucky University. In August 2009, she earned a certification in Appreciative Inquiry from the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University.

Comparison of reporting of food benefits and risks in European newspaper

Dr. Mary Friel

Dr. Mary Friel joined the European Food Information Council (EUFIC) as Food Safety & Risk Communication Manager in February 2012. She manages EUFIC’s Food Safety and Quality Interest Group which is comprised of industry representatives from Europe’s leading food and drink companies and is EUFIC’s main researcher on the EU FP7 funded FoodRisC (Perceptions and communication of food risk/benefits across Europe) project. She is a current member of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Stakeholder Consultative Group on Emerging Risks. Prior to joining EUFIC, Mary worked with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland as Technical Executive in food microbiology. She also worked in a consultancy capacity with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), lectured part-time on Food Regulatory Affairs in Dublin Institute of Technology and has worked in a technical role for an indigenous Irish food company. Mary holds a B.Sc. (Hons) degree and a PhD in Industrial Microbiology from University College Dublin.

The challenges of reporting about nutrition; a journalist’s perspective

Emilio de Benito Cañizares

Emilio de Benito holds a MSc. in Journalism and degree in Chemistry. He joined El País journal in 2000 as a reporter, and has been in charge of the Science and Heath area since 2005. He has covered congresses on different health issues, such as aids, cancer, mental illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, and projects like the Ciberobn (Research Network on Nutrition and Obesity).