

PRESS RELEASE

12th International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium

April 7-8, 2017, Florence, Italy

New pasteurization method will increase the critical value of breast milk at milk banks

Baar/Bologna, 28 March 2017. Breast milk plays a critical role in supporting the vulnerable premature infant's immune system, growth, and long-term cognitive development. April 7-8, at the International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium in Florence, Prof. Guido Moro unveils an innovation in donor milk pasteurization which will ensure that premature infants get more of the unique ingredients they need to survive and thrive.

Even the Pope recognizes the importance of breastfeeding. Public incidents, from Pope Francis encouraging mothers to go ahead and breastfeed their crying, hungry infants in the Sistine Chapel, to the breastfeeding mother who was asked to leave a national museum, have shined a media spotlight on the breastfeeding rights of women and infants, pushing this issue to the front of social and political agenda in countries around the world.

The unmatched benefits of fresh mother's milk have inspired Prof. Guido Moro to dedicate decades of his career to the establishment of high-quality milk banks across Italy and throughout Europe, for premature and other infants not yet able to feed directly at the breast or to get milk from their own mothers. He was the first president of the European Milk Bank Association (EMBA), and founded the Human Milk Bank of Milan, the most technologically advanced human milk bank in Italy. Because donor milk must be collected from multiple donors and stored, pasteurization is important to ensuring hygiene and safe preservation. However, traditional Holder pasteurization that involves treating the milk at 62.5°C for 30 minutes destroys numerous bioactive and nutritional ingredients, diminishing the positive effects of the milk. At the symposium, Prof. Moro will unveil his latest ground-breaking work: A new high-temperature, short-time (HTST) pasteurization method that promises to retain significantly more unique bioactive and nutritional properties of donor milk, offering greater support for struggling infants.

Breast milk plays an especially critical role in ensuring the survival and proper development of premature infants, 10% of the global population of newborns, including the most vulnerable low-birth-weight and sick infants in the neonatal ward. Breast milk delivers irreplaceable enzymes, proteins, fats, and other bioactive elements which support the premature infant's immature organs and gastrointestinal and metabolic systems. Breast milk feeding has been proven to reduce rates of serious disease, including necrotizing enterocolitis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, retinopathy of prematurity, and numerous other conditions which jeopardize the survival of premature infants. Breast milk has even been tied to reduced rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease later in life. Most impressively, breast milk can have substantial, positive, long-term impact on the cognitive development of premature infants, who are at much greater risk of permanent neurological impairments than term infants.

In addition to Prof. Moro's research, Assoc. Prof. Donna Geddes will offer evidence of the positive impact of the development of sucking skills in premature infants. Assoc. Prof. Luigi Corvaglia will explain why the conventional measures for premature infant growth and development need to shift to a breast milk-based metric. The Family Integrated Care Model, a revolution in neonatal care developed by Prof. Shoo Lee, will demonstrate the power of introducing not only early breastfeeding, but also the healthcare involvement and loving interaction of mothers and fathers in the neonatal ward.

Symposium participants will be the first to learn about Prof. Catharina Svanborg's latest breakthroughs in exploiting the cancer-fighting properties in the breast milk complex HAMLET (Human Alpha-lactalbumin Made Lethal to Tumor cells), which kills over 40 cancers. Prof. Bo Lönnerdal will share new proof of the bioactive

power of breast milk proteins, which serve as far more than nutrition, and uniquely activate the infant's immune system. Assoc. Prof. Katie Hinde will offer the latest insights into the continuing evolution of lactation which parallels the evolving socioecological conditions and developmental priorities of the human species, individual mothers, and their infants.

New methods for prioritizing and standardizing breastfeeding support will also be presented. Dr. Riccardo Davanzo will introduce a hospital protocol to ensure mothers and infants can breastfeed safely in the first two hours after delivery. Prof. Diane Spatz will explain her 10-step training and standard model, designed to improve breastfeeding rates in low, medium, and high-resource settings globally.

Fittingly, the symposium plenary will open with a welcome speech by Sara Funaro, Councillor for Welfare and Health, Municipality of Florence. Later, a special address from Marianna Madia, Italian Minister of Public Administration and Simplification, will explain the importance of the new national directive guaranteeing a woman's right to breastfeed in public spaces.

Prof. Guido Moro has summed up the tone of the symposium and issued us all with a challenge: "New scientific evidence is overwhelming: the unparalleled value of mother's breast milk to premature and term infants has never been so clear. It is up to the medical community, government, and society to make the changes necessary to ensure that all infants receive optimal breast milk feeding, and that mothers and families receive the support they need to provide it."

Registration for journalists:

Pre-symposium Media Conference, Friday, 7 April, 10:30-11:30 am. Journalists are invited to participate in the entire conference, and to interview all nine speakers, or journalists can just attend the media conference, where an overview of each speaker's academic presentation will be offered, followed by a Q&A.

Register for the full program, for the media conference only, and/or for **interactive livestream sessions**, including the media conference, and **special interviews** with **Assoc. Prof. Katie Hinde** and **Assoc. Prof Luigi Corvaglia**: www.medela.com/mediaregistration

About Medela

Founded in 1961 by Olle Larsson and headquartered in Switzerland, Medela today is led by his son Michael Larsson. Medela concentrates on two business units: "Human Milk", the leader in the development and production of breast milk feeding products and solutions, and "Healthcare", which engineers and manufactures highly innovative medical vacuum technology solutions. Medela conducts basic research in partnership with leading scientists, medical professionals and universities, and uses the research results in the development of its breastfeeding products and solutions. Medela has 18 subsidiaries in Europe, North America and Asia, and together with independent partners distributes its products in more than 100 countries. The company employs more than 1,800 staff worldwide, 440 of whom are located in the Canton of Zug, Switzerland.

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