

DSM Research – Global Virtual Lab

Published by: Vikas Sonak / Wendy Mertens

Date: 16 March 2007

Building bridges to combat malnutrition

SIGHT AND LIFE presented book *Nutritional Anemia* at BioVision 2007

SIGHT AND LIFE, the humanitarian initiative of DSM – the leading manufacturer for nutritional ingredients – presented the book *Nutritional Anemia* at BioVision 2007. The book aims to help fight the devastating health burden of nutritional anemia throughout the world.

Kul C. Gautam (Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF), Michael Stayton (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations World Food Programme) and Hugo Siblesz (Dutch Ambassador, France) received the book from SIGHT AND LIFE at a special session on March 11th, 2007 at BioVision, the World Life Sciences Forum, in Lyon, France.

Editors Klaus Kraemer (SIGHT AND LIFE, Basel) and Michael B. Zimmermann (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich) worked with leading scientists from academia and international organizations in compiling the latest research on nutritional anemia. The book will point the way forward in controlling this major global health problem.



Photo: from l. to r. Michael Stayton (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations World Food Programme), Kul C. Gautam (Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF), Klaus Kraemer (Secretary General, SIGHT AND LIFE), Hugo Siblesz (Dutch Ambassador, France)

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More than two billion people globally are affected by anemia – especially mothers and children in the developing world – and approximately one million of them die of anemia every year. Up to 200 million children are not reaching their mental and physical potential because of this and other forms of malnutrition. The loss in gross domestic product is estimated to amount to \$50 billion (US) per year. Unfortunately, there has been little documented progress in the global fight against this public health scourge over the last decades.

Klaus Kraemer, Secretary General of SIGHT AND LIFE explains: *"With this book, which for the first time specifies all critical factors of nutritional anemia, we want to demonstrate our responsibility and point the way forward in combating this public health problem. What we still need is to build bridges between science and technology, service providers, and political as well as financial decision makers. The eradication of nutritional anemia will be a big step forward in reaching the Millennium Development Goals of the UN in terms of malnutrition, morbidity and mortality of children and mothers and will have a major benefit on the social and economic development of the affected countries."*

BioVision, the World Life Sciences Forum, in Lyon

Hunger, disease and environmental damage – these are the major problems affecting the world. And these were the topics addressed at the 5th BioVision, the World Life Sciences Forum, which took place March 11–14, 2007 in Lyon, France. Leading international experts from science, politics and industry came together with civil society representatives to discuss and agree on actions for change in health, nutrition and environmental issues.

This year's event focused solely on the contribution of Life Sciences to the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. At the beginning of the millennium all members of the UN agreed on these goals, (e.g., to reduce hunger in the world's population by half, to reduce the mortality rate among children under five by two thirds and to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015). However, there are still more than 850 million hungry people in the world. Hunger is the number one threat to health in the world, with more than 10 million people dying each year of hunger-related causes – that is more than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

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It is time to take action. The primary goal of BioVision, the World Life Sciences Forum is to develop concrete recommendations and proposals, leading to constructive action whenever possible.

Workshop on nutritional anemia

In September 2006 SIGHT AND LIFE hosted a workshop with scientists from leading academic institutions and global organizations, including WHO, UNICEF, FAO, World Bank, World Food Programme, International Nutrition Foundation and The Micronutrient Initiative to develop solutions in the fight against nutritional anemia.

The workshop included an update on the magnitude of the anemia problem, its economic and functional consequences, basic scientific information on iron metabolism, the role of infections, detailed programmatic approaches and an overview of the safety and technical aspects of interventions. The book *Nutritional Anemia* provides an account of the information presented and comprehensively discussed at the workshop in Barcelona.

Building bridges to combat nutritional anemia

This book also contains some good news: the realization that anemia is not simply iron deficiency and that by building bridges between science and technology, service providers and political as well as financial decision makers, it can be effectively reduced.

“This textbook also serves as a guide for how government, international agencies and non-governmental organizations can work together to decrease rates of nutritional anemia worldwide,” explains James T. Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Program in his foreword, describing the book as key to reducing overall hunger and malnutrition rates.

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"This book is an important contribution reminding us that in order to reduce anemia, we need to recognize that no single intervention will solve the problem, but that the solution requires an integrated strategy of complementary interventions," said Kul C. Gautam, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF at the DSM - SIGHT AND LIFE special session at BioVision, in Lyon.

To this end SIGHT AND LIFE presented the first copies of the book: Kul C. Gautam (Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF), Michael Stayton (Deputy Executive Director, UN World Food Programme) and Hugo Siblesz (Dutch Ambassador France) received this road map in the global fight against nutritional anemia, hunger and malnutrition.

Nutritional Anemia shall be instrumental in helping to reach the Millennium Goals of the United Nations in terms of malnutrition and mortality. In the future DSM and SIGHT AND LIFE will continue to work closely with partners such as UNICEF, the World Food Programme and other international organizations and play a vital role in the global battle against nutritional anemia.

Literature:

Klaus Kraemer and Michael B. Zimmermann (Editors): "Nutritional Anemia", SIGHT AND LIFE Press, 2007, ISBN 3-906412-33-4.

For more information:

Klaus Kraemer

Tel: +41 61 6887494

Email: klaus.kraemer@dsm.com