On 26th April, BNF hosted a half day conference, chaired by Professor Alan Shenkin, reflecting on developments in nutrition science over the past 25 years, and speculating what the future may hold.

The keynote address by HRH The Princess Royal recognised dramatic changes in the nutrition agenda over the period, from efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition to the rising prevalence of obesity and the ‘double burden’ of disease many low- and middle-income countries are facing.

Sara Stanner, Science Director at BNF, acknowledged how technological advancements since the 1990s have changed how science is communicated today. Awareness of the relationship between diet and health has increased, however inconsistent information, particularly in the media, has hindered positive dietary behaviour change over recent years.

Professor Alison Lennox, University of Surrey, outlined the development of national nutritional surveys, emphasising their importance in assessing the diet, nutrient intake and nutritional status of the general population in the UK, and how they have supported science and policy over the years.

Professor John Mathers, Newcastle University, explained that over the last two centuries, life expectancy has increased at a rate of approximately 20 years per century. Research has led to greater awareness of interactions between nutrition and genotype, and better nutrition reduces the ageing process and decreases the risk of age-related ill-health.

However, age-related diseases still cause 85% of UK deaths.

Professor Christine Williams, University of Reading, discussed the results of two widely reported meta-analyses which questioned the relationship between saturated fat and cardiovascular disease. The results of these studies sparked major interest in the media, however Professor Williams explained the limitations of observational studies to assess this relationship, such as the historical nature of baseline dietary assessments, particularly with respect to dietary fat intakes which have changed dramatically over 30 years.

Professor Judy Buttriss, Director General, presented some global challenges, such as securing a sustainable future food supply. It’s estimated the global population will reach 9.7 million by 2050, and is facing a double burden of 1 billion people going to bed hungry and over 1 billion adults being overweight or obese. Another billion have micronutrient deficiencies. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a healthy, sustainable, low impact food supply that is affordable by all.
The BNF Annual Day was held on 17th November 2015 at the Royal College of Physicians, London.

Professor Keith Frayn, Emeritus Professor of Human Metabolism at the University of Oxford, delivered the BNF Annual Lecture, Living with lipids: Reflections of a fat physiologist. A summary of Professor Frayn’s lecture is available to access for free at http://bit.ly/IXmWhUL, and the lecture is available to watch online at http://bit.ly/1s0Gwxo.

The Annual Lecture was followed by the prize-giving ceremony, where the 2015 BNF Prize was presented to Professor Philip Calder, Professor of Nutritional Immunology at the University of Southampton. Professor Calder’s work has mainly been devoted to exploring the metabolism and functionality of fatty acids, with an emphasis on the role of omega-3 fatty acids.

Other prizes presented on the day include the BNF Drummond Education Awards that celebrate the most outstanding work in food and nutrition by students and their teachers, throughout the UK at GCSE, Standard Grade, A-level and Advanced Higher; and the BNF Drummond Pump Priming Awards for newly-appointed lecturers and research fellows working in the field of human nutrition, which were awarded to Dr Ed Chambers from Imperial College London and Dr Hyang-Min Byun from Newcastle University.

A Facts Behind the Headlines article was published in the March issue of Nutrition Bulletin looking at the scientific evidence behind health effects of coconut oil, a popular ingredient among consumers and manufacturers. At present there is no good scientific evidence that consuming coconut oil has any specific health benefits and studies demonstrate that coconut oil is likely to raise blood cholesterol due to its high saturated fat content. The paper had 8587 downloads in February alone and attracted widespread coverage on social media.

Watch the lecture at http://bit.ly/1s0Gwxo

Coconut oil – a nutty idea?

The paper is free to access at http://bit.ly/1TTWCT5

The Eatwell Guide

Public Health England launched the Eatwell Guide in March 2016, which is a refreshed version of the UK’s healthy eating model the eatwell plate. There are many similarities between both models. The Eatwell Guide still shows the different types of foods we should eat – and in what proportions – to have a healthy, balanced diet. However, there are some distinct differences, such as the resizing and renaming of some segments, removal of foods high in fat, sugars and salt from the plate to help consumers understand that these products should be consumed infrequently and in small amounts, as well as the inclusion of a hydration message. To see the other differences and for more information, go to http://bit.ly/1onTpPT

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New online training portal

As part of our ongoing commitment to deliver high quality online training, BNF has launched a brand new online training portal. It has a fresh, modern design and can be used on PCs, tablets and mobile devices. Over time, this portal will feature a variety of courses targeting a range of audiences including the general public, health professionals, teachers and caterers.

We are in the process of updating all our training courses. However, we have recently launched a new course on Complementary feeding and obesity designed for health visitors and other health professionals working with parents/carers and young children.

To view the new portal, go to https://nutrition.training
BNF Healthy Eating Week 2016

BNF is busy preparing for its fourth BNF Healthy Eating Week which will take place from 13th – 17th June 2016. Over 5,500 nurseries and schools, representing over 2.5 million young people, have already registered for the Week. Electronic resources are available to help teachers plan engaging, health promoting activities for their pupils. During the Week, nurseries and schools will be able to take on five health challenges (have breakfast, have 5 A DAY, drink plenty, get active and try something new), join live cook-a-longs and run a health festival!

For more information, visit www.healthyeatingweek.org.uk

BNF Healthy Eating Week in the workplace

This year, BNF Healthy Eating Week is open not only to schools and nurseries, but to workers too. Promoting health in the workplace has many benefits for employers and employees, including increased productivity, reduced staff turnover and improved staff morale. BNF Healthy Eating Week gives UK organisations the opportunity to build on workplace health initiatives, to focus on healthy eating and physical activity, and promote the benefits of healthy living. Changing health behaviours is notoriously difficult and so, new for this year, alongside the five health challenges, information is being provided on ways to encourage positive shifts in health behaviours. Downloadable resources have been developed to help organisations plan their Week, including an e-planning guide, poster and health tracker.

Access the downloadable resources at http://bit.ly/IVGPEnR

Virtual Issue on vitamin D

In light of the topicality of vitamin D, Nutrition Bulletin and the Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics have collaborated to produce a Virtual Issue on this topic. Entitled Vitamin D - Population Requirements, Intake and Status: Implications for Health, this includes thirteen papers and can be accessed for free at http://bit.ly/1nTb56p

Micronutrient status and intake in the UK

BNF has published a review exploring different factors that may influence micronutrient intakes and status in the UK over the following decade and beyond. Over the next few years, it is likely that the micronutrients of concern will remain similar, although continuation of dietary trends could result in further decreases in iron and calcium intakes. Possible changes to the future food supply resulting from issues such as climate change and a growing global population mean that dietary patterns need to be identified that can provide us with the vitamins and minerals we need for health, in appropriate amounts, which are also affordable and sustainable. The review can be accessed at http://bit.ly/1XiFWW5

Are health professionals raising awareness of the importance of fibre?

BNF commissioned an online survey of 50 UK practice nurses, gaining insight into their knowledge and understanding of nutrition, particularly relating to fibre. The results of the survey have informed a News and Views article that will appear in the September issue of Nutrition Bulletin but can be accessed free online now at http://bit.ly/1TTW67u
CHOOSE YOUR FATS WISELY!

Wondering what to drizzle over your salads or roast your potatoes? Different oils have different properties and flavours. This BNF guide can help inform your choice.

The government's new Eatwell Guide advises that we should choose small amounts of unsaturated oils (plant/vegetable oils like rapeseed, olive and nut oils, and spreads made from them). It is essential to include some fat in our diets but many of us are consuming too much saturated fat. Current authoritative national and international dietary advice is to eat less saturated fat, or swap foods high in saturated fat for those high in unsaturated fat, to reduce the health risks linked with high blood cholesterol levels.

Oils are sensitive to heat, light and oxygen, so store them in a cupboard

Virgin oils are produced by physical or mechanical means only

High temperatures can impact oil’s structure and flavour, so do not regularly re-use

A health claim has been approved for polyphenols in virgin olive oils as these can protect against some oxidative damage*.

Did you know?… Most of the ‘vegetable’ oil in supermarkets is rapeseed oil

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Oils for cooking, oils for dressing

Oils with higher smoke points, (e.g. sunflower, standard rapeseed or olive, and peanut oils) are better for roasting and frying, whereas oils with lower smoke points (e.g. virgin oils, walnut and hemp seed oils) are better kept for salad dressings or drizzling. Refined oils usually have a higher smoke point than virgin/cold-pressed oils and so are more suitable for high temperature cooking.

Limit saturated fat

Oils and fats with a greater proportion of saturated fat, such as coconut oil, goose fat, ghee and butter, can be used for flavour but in limited amounts or only occasionally. Palm oil is used commercially for functionality but is also high in saturated fat. Check food labels to see how much saturated fat (labelled as saturates) is in different foods.

*Olive oil polyphenols contribute to the protection of blood lipids from oxidative stress

Choose your oil

Nutritional properties

Rapeseed oil
Available as standard/ refined, cold-pressed virgin and extra virgin
High in:
Unsaturated fat
Monounsaturated fat
Vitamin E

Olive oil
Available as standard/ refined, cold-pressed virgin and extra virgin
High in:
Unsaturated fat
Monounsaturated fat
Vitamin E

Sunflower oil
High in:
Polyunsaturated fat
Vitamin E

Nut and seed oils & other speciality oils like sesame, grapeseed, peanut/groundnut, walnut, rice bran, hemp seed oils

High in:
Unsaturated fat

To make a claim on labels:

High in unsaturated fat
At least 70% of the total fat present is unsaturated

High in monounsaturated fat
At least 45% of the total fat present is monounsaturated

High in polyunsaturated fat
At least 45% of the total fat present is polyunsaturated

For more information go to http://bit.ly/1Ua0hMC

www.nutrition.org.uk