

Lipids in metabolic health and disease

Citation for published version (APA):

Glatz, J. F., de Groot, R. H. M., Hesselink, M. K. C., & Schrauwen, P. (2011). Lipids in metabolic health and disease. *Prostaglandins Leukotrienes and Essential Fatty Acids*, 85(5), 195.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plefa.2011.04.006>

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2011

DOI:

[10.1016/j.plefa.2011.04.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plefa.2011.04.006)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Prostaglandins, Leukotrienes and Essential Fatty Acids

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/plefa

Editorial

Lipids in metabolic health and disease

This special issue of *PLEFA* contains a selection of original research papers and brief surveys presented at the ninth biennial Congress of the *International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids* (ISSFAL), held in Maastricht, the Netherlands from May 29 to June 2, 2010. The theme of the congress was "Lipids in Metabolic Health and Disease". Plenary lectures were given by renowned scientists from around the world, while selected topics were covered in concurrent sessions organised in three tracks: Lipids & Health, Lipids & Nutrition, and Biochemistry of Lipids. The Alexander Leaf Distinguished Scientist Award for Lifetime Achievement was presented to Norman Salem, Jr., Ph.D., University of Rochester, NY, for his major contribution to our current knowledge on docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). The winner of the Early Career Award was John Paul SanGiovanni, Ph.D., National Institutes of Health, Bethesda MD, for his studies on the relationship of long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid intake with pathogenic processes.

A new record was set for total attendance, which amounted to 609 participants from 38 countries. In order to encourage individuals early in their careers to do research in the area of fatty acids and lipids, 40 New Investigator Awards were provided. Nine of them entered a competition which included voting on a ballot form by all delegates. The three winners of the Top New Investigator Award (one for each track) were Giuseppe Astarita, University of California, USA, Mariela Bernabe, University of Mexico, Mexico, and Remko Kuipers, University of Groningen, the Netherlands. Another highlight was a lively dinner debate

where supporters and opponents discussed the issue whether unsaturated or rather saturated fatty acids are beneficial for heart health.

The present issue of *PLEFA* covers 14 of the major lecture presentations, including those of the three TOP New Investigator Award winners, and illustrates the breadth of topics covered at ISSFAL 2010. It is our sincere hope that this issue will serve as a useful source of information and thus form a stimulus for future fundamental and applied research in the area so as to bring us to a better understanding of the biological effects of fatty acids and lipid metabolism in health and disease.

The 10th Congress of ISSFAL will take place in Vancouver, Canada, May 26–30, 2012, and is organised by a team chaired by Tom Clandinin. The theme of the meeting will be "The Impact of Dietary Fat on Human Health". Located on the west coast of North America, equidistant from Europe and Asia, the modern and multi-cultural city of Vancouver will truly bring an international feeling to the ISSFAL Congress. We anticipate a stimulating meeting on advances in the exciting and continuously expanding field of fatty acid and lipid research.

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