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The Diogenes Project – Diet, Obesity & Genes
Targeting the obesity problem: seeking new insights & routes to prevention

Project Co-ordinator:

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MEDIA RELEASE

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HOW TO STOP REGAINING WEIGHT? THAT'S THE REAL QUESTION

Most of us can lose weight initially. Keeping it off is another matter!

The inability to manage weight gain and weight regain throughout life is helping to fuel the obesity epidemic in adults and children throughout Europe. However, the successful participation of more than 400 families in 8 countries in the largest European dietary intervention study, co-ordinated by the EC funded Diogenes¹ project, is helping to address this vital issue.

The key focus of the Diogenes study is to identify the most effective diet to help adults stop regaining weight after initial successful weight loss.

To participate in the Diogenes study, adult family members were required to lose at least 8% of their body weight, before the whole family was admitted to the 'dietary intervention' part of the study and randomised to one of five diets.

763 participating adults were successful, losing between them a total of 8500 kg, equivalent to the weight of 4 fully grown bull elephants and 11.2kg on average for each person. (*see Notes below for copyright free illustration*)

After this successful weight loss phase, 565 families (763 adults and 787 children) were randomly chosen to follow a diet either high or low in protein or high or low in glycaemic index foods. The fifth diet, the control diet, was based on the family's usual diet but with additional advice on the inclusion of healthy foods.

In two centres (Copenhagen and Maastricht) supermarkets set up for the study provided families with free food for 6 months, followed by 6 months of dietary advice and support. The other 6 centres (UK, Bulgaria, Crete, Czech Republic, Germany & Spain) provided families with 6 months of dietary advice and support only.

"The real target in this Diogenes research study is the prevention of weight regain after initial weight loss," states Professor Arne Astrup, co-ordinator of the 8 country dietary intervention study, one of the five research lines organised by Diogenes. "Most of us can lose weight if we set our minds to it – but we are not so good at keeping it off." **-more-**

¹ Diogenes – Diet, Obesity & Genes – is a 5 year EC funded pan-European programme which integrates dietary, genetic, physiological, psychological/behavioural and food technology studies. www.diogenes-eu.org

Professor Astrup continues: “The data now being collated and analysed from the Diogenes study on how successful each diet has been in preventing weight regain in each country will provide clearer answers to European consumers on which diet is likely to be most successful.”

Professor Wim Saris, Executive Director of the entire Diogenes project concludes: “Preliminary results from the Diogenes dietary intervention study will be disclosed at the European Congress of Obesity (ECO) (14 May 2008) with results of the entire project being presented at the Diogenes satellite on 5/6 May 2009 as part of ECO.”

Release Ends.

Media Resources

1. Interviews available with
Professor Arne Astrup, Co-ordinator RTD1: Dietary Intervention Study
To organise interview please contact:
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2. Available on the Diogenes website at www.diogenes-eu.org/News/FILM.asp
the DVD describing and illustrating the 8 country Dietary Intervention Study of Diogenes.
Access to the film will be made available from the home page on 29 April 2008.
3. Illustration below is copyright free to use. Please credit the Diogenes project and include the website address when utilised. © Diogenes www.diogenes-eu.org



Four adult male elephants weigh 8,500kg, the amount of weight lost by 743 adults participating in the Diogenes weight regain study.
www.diogenes-eu.org

Further Media enquiries:

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To receive further and ongoing information about the Diogenes project, please email Petra Goyens as above with your request, providing your full contact and media details.

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Notes to Editors

1. Diogenes www.diogenes-eu.org managed by Professor Wim Saris (Maastricht) is an EC-funded pan-European Research Programme targeting the obesity problem from a dietary perspective: seeking new insights and new routes to prevention. It is an Integrated Project of the EU Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2005-2009). The name Diogenes is an acronym for the project and stands for 'Diet, Obesity and Genes'. Diogenes is integrating dietary, genetic, physiological, psychological/behavioural and food technology studies
2. The 8 countries taking part in the dietary intervention study (RTD1) are Denmark, Greece (Crete), Spain, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Bulgaria, UK and Germany.
3. Further information on RTD1 - **Obesity and macronutrient composition of the diet** (Co-ordinator: Professor Arne Astrup, Copenhagen, Denmark)

The macronutrient composition of the diet appears to play a role in determining the total energy intake. Proteins have been shown to produce a higher degree of satiety and to have a higher stimulating effect on energy expenditure compared with fat and carbohydrates. In addition carbohydrates with a low glycaemic index (GI) have been suggested to have a higher satiating power than carbohydrates having a high GI. However, so far this evidence, which has led to some widely promoted dietary recommendations, has come only from studies limited in duration, subject numbers and types, and dietary variables.

The core of RTD1 is a 6-12 months dietary intervention study involving some 350 families (obese/overweight parents and their children) across 8 European centres. All adults completed an 8-week weight loss phase with a fixed low energy intake. Afterwards the families were randomised to one of 5 diet groups differing in carbohydrate GI and protein content. The aim of this controlled intervention study is to address the efficacy of these diets in preventing weight (re)gain. The intervention study is generating information and materials for RTDs 2, 3 and 4, and may test new food concepts from RTD5.

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