

# 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on Probiotics, Functional & Baby Foods

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### Functional foods for overweight and diabetes

Overweight represents an important risk factor for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular events; therefore, any strategy to prevent or treat these conditions should consider lifestyle modifications to be able to achieve weight reduction. However, sustained behavioural changes are difficult to achieve; the identification of functional foods which could influence specific physiological targets relevant for fat accumulation in the human body and blood glucose regulation may be helpful for prevention of overweight and type 2 diabetes. Foods can be regarded as functional if proven to affect beneficially a target function in the body, beyond adequate nutritional effects, in a way relevant to improved state of health and well-being, reduction of risk of diseases, or both. Functional foods might have a particularly high impact for prevention of overweight and type 2 diabetes where more than in many other fields, the link between nutrition, biological responses and diseases is clearly established. Functional foods for obesity should be able to influence the energy balance equation regulated by the control of energy intake and/or of energy dissipated as heat (thermogenesis). In addition, functional foods for diabetes should be able to influence plasma glucose regulation and reduce the postprandial glucose excursion. So far many ingredients have been tested for their functionality in this field; among them it is worth mentioning polyphenols, dietary fibre and cereal derived foods enriched in resistant starch, fructo-oligosaccharides or aleurone. Overall, the available evidence on functional foods so far identified in this field is incomplete: the major gap is the lack of diet-based intervention trials of sufficient duration to be relevant for the natural history of overweight and type 2 diabetes.

### Biography

Gabriele Riccardi Professor of Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases, Chairman of the Master Course in Human Nutrition and Head of the Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolism Unit of the University Hospital. He has been President of the Società Italiana di Diabetologia (SID) and is presently President of the Italian Diabetes Research Foundation. He is an International Fellow of the American Heart Association and member of the Joint Committee of the European Society of Cardiology and the European Atherosclerosis Society for the Guidelines on Management of Dyslipidaemias. From 2002 to 2007, he was the Editor-in-Chief of *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular diseases*, an international scientific journal published by Elsevier.

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