



THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Micronutrients
and Health

THIRD 'MICRONUTRIENTS AND HEALTH' APPG MEETING POINTS TO HUGE IMPACT OF NUTRITION IN THE AVOIDANCE OF NON-COMMUNICABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

On 7th December, the 'Micronutrients and Health' All Party Parliamentary Group, the Secretariat for which is managed by the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA), held its third meeting in the House of Commons.

The meeting focused on '*The global burden of chronic disease: a new paradigm in healthcare*', and Rosie Cooper, Labour MP for West Lancashire and Chair of the group, praised the HFMA's efforts in promoting training and education and the highest quality standards of products and services.

The group, formed earlier this year, aims to promote awareness and understanding, and to help form strategies in Parliament, of the vital role of micronutrients in helping people to be healthier, and is supported by MPs including Sir David Amess, Gavin Robinson, Derek Thomas and Dawn Butler.

Discussions were led by Professor Ajit Lalvani of Imperial College, London. Professor Lalvani is one of the world's foremost authorities in his field and serves as Chair of Infectious Diseases, National Institute of Health Research Senior Investigator and Wellcome Senior Clinical Research Fellow at Imperial College, and Founding Director of the Tuberculosis Research Centre.

Professor Lalvani used his extensive medical experience to communicate to the group that a lifestyle approach to the prevention of non-communicable diseases is needed to tackle their root causes. With the majority of the population not even close to achieving their 5-a-day, more needed to be done by the Government to communicate the importance of healthy eating and the key role that micronutrient supplements can play as we transition to healthier diets. This will be a long-term process because changing human behaviour is a big challenge.

Following the discussion, there was lively debate amongst the group, which included several noted academics in the field of human nutrition. They discussed the potential of social prescribing as a method of improving nutrition, while it was also noted that there needed to be better education and communication for GPs in nutrition and self-care.

At the end of the meeting, two key actions were agreed which will be taken forward within Parliament by Rosie Cooper and the APPG secretariat:

- Cost savings for the healthcare system, a topic very high on the Parliamentary agenda at the moment, can be achieved through increased awareness for supplementation of the diet with key micronutrients - particularly for at-risk groups. The HFMA, along with other interested industry stakeholders, should consider how to quantify any potential savings to support an initiative here in Westminster.
- In her role as a member of the Health Select Committee, Rosie agreed to explore ways to raise this subject with that group, and whether expert opinion-formers in this area, like Professor Lalvani, can address that group personally to emphasise the scale of the issue.

She added: "*Our third meeting was our most successful yet. It was fascinating to see Professor Lalvani talk so passionately about the real and meaningful effect that small changes in lifestyle can have on such terrible diseases, and, incidentally, on our overstretched healthcare system. In all my time here in Westminster I have never seen this explained so clearly. We have some very worthwhile and important action steps to now move forward with.*"



The APPG group on Micronutrients for Health meets four times a year to discuss key nutrition considerations, and aims to lobby effectively for better targeted guidance on nutrient intakes, by engaging with UK Department of Health, Public Health England and other stakeholders.

For more information on the All Party Parliamentary Group for Micronutrients and Health please contact appg@hfma.co.uk, or visit www.micronutrientsappg.org

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The HFMA

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK's natural health industry and represents more than 125 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products.

Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk.