

PRESS RELEASE

Italian dissertation on cholesterol wins European Alpro Foundation Award for Masters

Brussels, 6 April 2011 – Viviana De Vergori, a student at the university of Milan (Italy) today won the European Alpro Foundation Award for her dissertation on the effect of fibers and vegetal proteins on LDL-cholesterol. Elevated LDL-cholesterol can cause cardiovascular diseases and Viviana's research tackles exactly that issue. With this award, the Alpro Foundation aims to stimulate scientific research in Europe in the field of plant-based food and health.

Bad cholesterol: a hot topic

Cholesterol is a hot topic in the medical world and scientific research is necessary to study the impact of our diet on our cholesterol. The Alpro Foundation is therefore proud to present Viviana De Vergori (Milan) with the European Alpro Foundation Award for her dissertation on the effect of fibers and vegetal proteins on LDL-cholesterol. Viviana's thesis was selected out of six European nominations that had already won the national prize in their own country.

"Research into cholesterol and the role of nutrition is crucial. Scientific research shows that a balanced nutrition can have a positive influence on our health. With the Alpro Foundation Award, our organisation encourages food research on an international level" says Professor Delzenne of the Alpro Foundation Board.

Viviana's thesis concludes that patients suffering from elevated LDL-cholesterol levels, or so-called 'bad' cholesterol, would benefit from a modified diet. Other scientists in the past have already proven that a diet consisting of vegetal proteins, fibers, phytosterols and tree nuts would be as effective as a mid-dose statin (= drugs that lower the cholesterol levels). Viviana asked herself two questions: firstly, could lupine proteins (legumes) potentially reduce cholesterol levels and secondly, could combinations of vegetal proteins and soluble fibers reduce cholesterol levels? The selected soluble fibers were oats and apple pectin. The results showed that a combination of vegetal proteins and soluble fibers do indeed reduce cholesterol levels.

Encouraging Young Scientific Research

The Alpro Foundation Award has been awarded to bachelor students in Belgium since 1996. In 2008 the Alpro Foundation decided to also reward master students with exceptional dissertations on plant-based nutrition. One master student is awarded the European Alpro Foundation Award; this year, Italian Viviana de Vergori was selected. She already won the national Italian award after her dissertation was chosen among 11 other entries.

The European Alpro Foundation Award for Masters was set up to support and promote scientific knowledge and research on nutrition and health. "Scientific research is necessary to ensure progress in our society. The work done by young students like Viviana allows us to continuously innovate and develop. Nutritional research in particular deserves the necessary attention



considering the impact on our health. We are proud of Viviana; she has chosen a very current topic and her results could eventually lead to new innovations”, says Professor Delzenne, who chaired the jury.

About the Alpro Foundation

The Alpro Foundation is an independent non-profit organisation which was established in 1996 - an initiative of Alpro. The aim of the foundation is to support and promote knowledge and scientific research in the field of nutrition and health. It focuses on plant-based nutrition and soya in particular. The foundation would like to raise awareness among health experts and the general public on the impact of 'nutrition on human health'. It organises various activities to achieve these objectives, such as conferences, the publication of an educational newsletter and research grants. For more information about the Alpro Foundation: www.alprofoundation.org

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