IMMC4 Summary Report  
_The Fourth International Medicinal Mushroom Conference_  
**September 23-27, 2007**  
*Ljubljana, Slovenia*  
Mary Jo Feeney, MS, RD, FADA  

This report is divided into two parts. Part one describes the open meeting “Mushrooms and Health Global PR Initiative – Increasing Mushroom Consumption Around the World” held Sunday, September 23 immediately prior to the conference. Part two identifies some of the key scientific presentations during the conference pertinent to the global initiative.  

**Part One: Mushrooms and Health Global PR Initiative – Increasing Mushroom Consumption Around the World**  

*Presentations:*  

Thirty-four attendees heard Greg Seymour, project manager of the global PR initiative, Catherine Ogilvie, Edelman Public Relations, and Mary Jo Feeney, manager of the operational aspects of the global initiative, describe the Initiative, how it is envisioned to operate, how such endeavors have worked in other food marketing models, how other countries, organizations, and individuals can participate, and what will happen next. Copies of each presentation can be requested from Seymour@amga.asn.au; Catherine.ogilvie@edelman.com and mj.feeney@earthlink.net.  

Greg Seymour described the objective of the Initiative: to provide the credible and scientific underpinning of the public relations efforts undertaken by each participating country or market. Using Australian market data, Seymour described the vision for 2025 with health as a key driver to position mushrooms as the ultimate superfood, eaten anyway, everyday. Recent results of mushroom promotion in Australia indicate that an
unprecedented 64% of consumers now consider mushrooms to be nutritious; and there has been a twofold increase in health related stories on mushrooms within the last two years. The advertising equivalent to promotional efforts during 2006-07 is estimated at $30 million.

Catherine Ogilvie described a 5-year perspective for increasing mushroom demand through 2012 by initially laying the foundation and filling the nutrition news pipeline; building relationships with key influencers; creating excitement around mushrooms as the new superfood; and extending the reach around the globe. To increase mushroom demand, mushrooms need to move from being perceived as a supporting/ingredient/luxury item to an essential food used frequently. To position mushrooms as a superfood for taste and health targeted to the food involved and health empowered, a research base is key. Laying the foundation to establish mushrooms as a superfood uses various tactics such as establishing credibility through advisory panels, building relationships and/or partnerships with organizations and the media, and creating different customer experiences through in-store promotions and online family favorite recipe programming. Growth for the mushroom industry requires leveraging health successes to date – research on weight management and immunity help address global issues.

Mary Jo Feeney described the Initiative components that provide the science to support the public relations efforts: a validated research document; a sustainable system to keep the research document current; and the identification of eminent scientists to lend credibility to the Initiative effort and provide expertise in outreach efforts. Input is welcome and needed to determine the content of the research document to be organized around nutrient/bioactive compounds (composition), health implications (consumption) and cultural/historical use of different mushroom strains/uses (edible/medicinal). Types of studies included in the research document need to be prioritized, perhaps by journal impact factor, timeliness of publication and type of study (epidemiology, test tube, cell culture, animal or clinical trial). Creating a sustainable system for continuity is the most challenging component to keep the public relations message fresh. Producing the Initiative components could be the work of an industry Initiative team, freelance writers, an evidence-based review by an independent organization, or proceedings from an invited seminar. Feedback from the presentation at IMMC4 will be used to help develop these key Initiative components.

The next major industry-wide discussion of the Initiative will be at the ISMS meeting in CapeTown, May 2008. The next meeting of the International Medicinal Mushroom Conference (IMMC5) will be held in 2009 in Nantong, China.

Part Two: Selected Scientific Presentations

The International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms, 2007, Volume 9, Numbers 3 and 4 contains all the plenary lectures, symposia oral presentations and poster presentations.
Articles can be downloaded from the Journal’s Website for a fee for non-subscribers. Some of the presentation themes and messages include:

- There is a great range in use/application of mushrooms and mushroom derivatives
  - Food with culinary use
  - Food with general nutritional value
  - Dietary supplement
  - Adjunctive pharmaceutical use
  - Pet food
- Purified compounds derived from mushrooms are needed to address potential poisoning consequences when searching/foraging for medicinal mushrooms.
- Eating mushrooms should be as popular as tea or coffee.
- Live healthier, happier and longer with mushrooms (ST Chang)
- There is a viral storm on the horizon (P. Stamets)
- Myconol – fuel from mushroom polysaccharides (P. Stamets)
- Conclusion or confusion?? Many active compounds are not fully characterized nor investigated (B. Strukelj)

**Antihyperlipidemic Effect of Pleurotus ostreatus in HIV: Results of a Pilot Proof-of-Principle Clinical Trial**

*Donald I. Abrams, Paul Couey, Starley B. Shade, Mary Ellen Kelly, Nnemdi Kamanu-Elias, and Paul Stamets*, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA and Fungi Perfecti, LLC, Kamilche Point, WA, USA

**A Mushroom Mycelia-Soy Extract (GCP) as a Complementary Therapy for Treatment of Prostate Cancer**

*Robert M. Hackman, 1 Philip C. Mack, 2 Ruth L. Vinall, 3 Rebecca A. Burich, 2 Hajime Fujii, 4 and Ralph W. deVere White* 3 Departments of 1Nutrition, 2Internal Medicine, and 3Urology, University of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA; 4Amino Up Chemical Co., Ltd., Sapporo, Japan

**Medicinal Mushrooms and Drug Discovery: Identification of Potent Inhibitors of Thrombin, of Pancreatic Lipase, and Novel Antibiotic and Antigenotoxic Compounds**
Borut Štrukelj, 1 Javor Kac, 1 Damjan Janeš, 1 Jernej Kristl, 1 Aleš Mlinarič, 1 Bojan Doljak, 1 Franc Pohleven, 2 and Samo Kreft 1 1Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; 2Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Medicinal Mushrooms – Their History, Present Use, and the Possibility of Becoming Relevant in Germany**
Jan I. Lelley GAMU Ltd., Institute for Mushroom Research, Krefeld 47800, Germany

**An Overview of the Traditions on Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms in Mexico**
Gastón Guzmán Instituto de Ecología, Apartado Postal 63, Xalapa, Veracruz 91000, Mexico

**Novel Antiviral Activity against Pox, SARS, Bird Flu, West Nile, and Other Viruses from Polypore Mushrooms Indigenous to the Old Growth Forests of the Pacific Northwest of North America**
Paul E. Stamets Fungi Perfecti Research Laboratories, P.O. Box 7634, Olympia, Wa. 98507, USA

**How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World**
Paul E. Stamets Fungi Perfecti Research Laboratories, P.O. Box 7634, Olympia, Wa. 98507, USA

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