

Report back from, FENS –Federation of European Nutrition Societies meeting – Madrid, Spain  
October 2011 Reported by Ann Fonfa, founder, the Annie Appleseed Project

Here is the conference aim:

*“The aim of this Symposium is to maintain the scientific rigor and encouragement that is present in our European Nutrition Societies while also pledging our commitment to relevant social topics which will no doubt create intense debate”.*

The majority of information presented here was not focused on cancer issues. I did sit in on several meetings that were useful to those of us in the cancer advocacy world. There were many discussions about probiotics and gut health which were quite interesting.

On Friday I listened to the session entitled: *“Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity”* with a panel of distinguished speakers included Prof Denis Lairon, president of FENS. There was a spirited discussion on the Mediterranean diet as well. Attendees came from many different countries and information concerned values in both the developing world and the developed world. Speakers and audience seem to agree that a variety of plant-based foods (the full color plate) made for better health. And the words “organically-grown” were mentioned often.

Saturday morning had a session *“Nutrition and Cancer - “Occurrence of Gastrointestinal Cancers: How Important Are Dietary Factors?”* With discussions about the effects of meat versus dietary fiber, energy density and energy balance, and dietary factors in colorectal cancer, this was a lively and interesting session, although nothing new was presented.

The conference had lots of enthusiastic participants from many countries including the USA. I was discouraged, however, immediately upon entry as the first exhibit booth I saw was the Coca Cola company. (see photo below)

I have spent many years speaking out against consumption of soda for anyone, especially those with cancer as evidence points to leeching of minerals from our bones (after chemo or radiation our bones are already weakened), high acidity (cancer needs alkaline atmosphere), high levels of sugar or artificial sweeteners which may be carcinogenic. Plus it is a waste of an opportunity to drink water, juice, tea, or coffee. All of those have value to our bodies and our health in direct contrast to soda.

The slogan at the Coca Cola booth was “hydrate” because they cannot say anything about nutrition, can they? While out to lunch, I had a conversation with someone also on their way to the meeting – he confirmed that the Coca Cola company was intent on being associated with the nutrition conferences in Europe.

Money continues to talk successfully. But I protest.

