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The Importance of improving Iron status in young women

Nutraleya is a member of Health Food Manufacturing Association (HFMA) attended the All-Party Parliamentary Group APPG – Micronutrients and Health, Chaired by Marcus Jones MP at the House of Commons on 15th July 2019.

The topic of focus was ***The iron imperative: The importance of improving iron status in young women.*** The evidence from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey showed high proportion of teenage girls and young adult women have low iron-intakes, some showing evidence of iron-deficiency anaemia and low iron stores.

This information raises the concern of the critical importance to discuss how to improve iron intakes including absorption of iron from different foods and the role of supplements in improving iron status. The meeting provided an opportunity by bringing together industry, academia, policy makers and politicians.

There were two esteemed speakers first; **Charlotte Stirling-Reed BSc, MSc, RNutr – to present findings** *of groups at risk of iron deficiency anaemia:* Ms Stirling-Reed is a Consultant Nutritionist who specialises in maternal, infant and child nutrition. She is registered with the Association for Nutrition, the Nutrition Society, SENSE Nutritionists and the Guild of Health Writers. She presented at risk groups that are iron deficient identifying them as children aged 1.5 - 3.5 years, girls 11-18 years and women of child bearing age – 19-49 year olds, around 54% girls are below LRNI.

Second esteemed speaker; Dr Sebastien Farnaud PhD, MSc, FRSB, FIBMS, FHEA - *Discussing strategies for improving iron status:* Dr Farnaud is Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences at Coventry University. He has held numerous research-led roles at the Dr Hadwen Trust, University of Westminster, University of Bedfordshire and Coventry University. He explained iron deficiency is one of the most common nutritional deficiencies. He explained Iron is essential for life for the transport of oxygen throughout the body and also other numerous essential enzymes such as intracellular oxidation, base metabolism etc.

Iron becomes toxic if allowed to form free radicals, it is easy to digest but very difficult to absorb. Dr Sebastien presented Iron replacement strategies; *Dietary Iron and *Iron supplementation to increase iron in-take and explained the various factors of iron absorption and the negative affects of too much iron, as iron cannot be excreted.

The conclusion informed that Iron is essential for our body, in western countries dietary iron should be sufficient but, if supplementation is required then consideration and care should be taken when deciding the type of iron to be taken, when it should be taken and what it should be taken with.

We believe GP's that prescribe Iron should also be referring patients to nutritional therapists to work on Iron regulation to address the causes of iron deficiency that leads to poor health unless targeted effectively.

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Thank you to HFMA