



A New York Minute



CASA Newsletter

NY Conference

Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

Issue 3, Volume 06

September, 2006

President's Message

I would like to thank all of the members who joined us at our June meeting at the FDA facility in Jamaica and made it one of our most successful meetings. There were many new faces in the crowd and strong support from all of the agencies in our jurisdiction. It is great to see support from the Suffolk County Department of Health, Nassau County Department of Health, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Hospital Program, our local supermarket chains and of course the hospitality of our host agency, the FDA. Let's continue to expand our membership base and strengthen the organization.

The summer months have been a busy time for many of our members. Suffolk County is home to some of our country's most beautiful beaches. Easthampton, Long Island was recently named one of our country's top 10 beaches by both the Travel Channel and Conde Nast Traveler. Along with this honor comes the influx of tourists, seasonal food establishments and temporary events. On any given weekend, Suffolk County food sanitarians can find themselves at such high profile events as the Hampton Classic Equestrian

Tournament, Jane Goodall Institute Fund Raiser, Honoring Roy Scheider, and the Hamptons Wine and Food Festival.

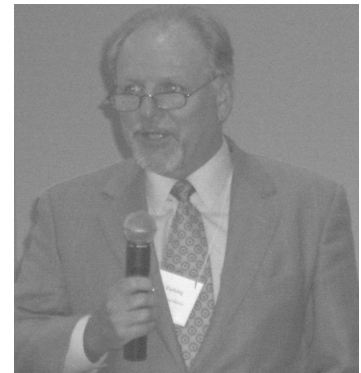
Our colleagues in NYC have also been very busy this summer investigating 76 cases of food borne illness associated with a multi-state outbreak of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. New York, Oregon and Washington states reported 177 cases of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in connection with the consumption of oysters and clams harvested in Washington and British Columbia, Canada. Details of the investigation were reported by the New York City Department of Health and Metal Hygiene in the CDC's August 8th MMWR.

I encourage all of our members and agencies to share information about current investigations and experiences by submitting articles for publication in our newsletter or by participating in the open forum at one of our quarterly meetings. Arrangements to address the membership via the open forum can be made prior to the meeting by contacting one of the Board Members.

Christopher Sortino
President
NY Conference CASA



Dr. Bruno Goussalt discusses Sous-Vide.



Terrence Furlong discusses food allergens.



Terry O'Riordan discusses Suffolk County's Body Art Code.



Body Blazes

How Nicotine Stops Inflammation Could Lead to New Drugs

By Lisa Melton (Scientific American, June 2006)

Nicotine has undergone an image overhaul, at least biomedically. In the past few years researcher have found that the substance can alleviate symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and ulcerative colitis. Just how nicotine battles these foes, however has remained unclear. Now, by studying sepsis, Luis Ulloa of North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, NY, has evidence elucidating nicotine's biochemical pathways that could lead to more potent anti-inflammatory drugs.

Sepsis, the most lethal of inflammatory conditions, is a bacterial invasion of the bloodstream. The third leading cause of death in the developed world, it accounts for nearly 10 percent of overall deaths in the U.S.. Every year. Infection causes part of the damage, but what makes patients critically ill is their own fiercely aggressive immune response. Macrophages churn out huge quantities of proinflammatory cytokines. This exaggerated immune response leads to tissue damage, and eventually the patient dies of cardiovascular dysfunction and multiorgan failure.

Ulloa and his collaborators have found something remarkable: nicotine can shut down this overshooting inflammatory response, to the point of reversing sepsis in mice. As far as anti-inflammatory treatments go, this is powerful stuff. "Nicotine taps into the body's own potent anti-inflammatory mechanisms," Ulloa explained. "That is the beauty of our approach. By using nicotine, we are coping physiological mechanisms that have been selected by evolution to modulate the immune system."

Specifically, nicotine mimics acetylcholine, the Cinderella of neurotransmitters. Largely ignored over the years, acetylcholine has been catapulted into a starring role, linking the nervous and the immune systems. Through acetylcholine the nervous system controls the inflammatory fires that constantly crop up in our bodies. Receptors for acetylcholine reside not only on nerve cell endings but also on immune cells. Nicotine binds and activates these receptors, allowing cross talk between the brain and immune system.

"This is something quite phenomenal" comments Wouter de Jonge of the Academic Medical Center of Amsterdam, who studies how macrophages respond to acetylcholine. "Smokers suffering from ulcerative colitis seemed to benefit from their habit, so there were hints that nicotine could ameliorate inflammatory diseases, but nobody could get a handle on it," he notes.

Now Ulloa's group may have provided an explanation for the positive effects that nicotine has on illnesses as diverse as schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, Tourette's syndrome and ulcerative colitis. In laboratory experiments, Ulloa demonstrated that nicotine latches onto nicotine receptors on macrophages and stops them from spewing out inflammatory cytokines. This clampdown is brutally effective. The researchers also identifies the specific receptor subtype, the alpha-7 acetylcholine receptor, that nicotine binds in macrophages to stop cytokine production.

But as a drug, nicotine is fraught with toxicity issues. Apart from its addictive nature, it can lead to cardiovascular problems and contribute to cancer. "No one is looking to use nicotine to treat inflammation," Ulloa says. "We want to design specific compounds that will target this receptor to take advantage of nicotine's anti-inflammatory effects while eluding its collateral toxicity."

"This is one of the great stories of the past few years-no question about it", remarks Mitchell Fink, an expert in critical care medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. A selective nicotine like compound may be promising therapy not only for sepsis but for a whole variety of chronic conditions, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes. The task at hand is to find the best surrogate for nicotine. Ulloa's petri dishes are the ones to watch.

Save the Date

Our holiday meeting will take place on December 12th at Russo's on the Bay.



Open Forum

Have something to say?

Share news from your organization with our membership during the open forum at the quarterly meetings!

Reserve a time slot by contacting any of the board members.



Choosing speakers and planning meetings is hard work!

Have an idea for a topic or a speaker? Let the board members know!

Quarterly Meeting

Our third quarterly meeting of the 2006 calendar year will be held on September 20th, at the FDA building located at 158 Liberty Ave in Jamaica. Proper ID is required to gain entrance to the building. Pre-registration is requested, so that we may give your name to the security guard at the front gate.

Please join us beginning at 9am for registration and continental breakfast

9:30-10:30 [Viral Hepatitis Transmission in Health Care Settings](#)

Jane A. Greenko
Regional Epidemiologist
NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control

10:30-11:30 [Handheld Technology : Is it Worth the Cost?](#)

Muhammad Ghani
Research Scientist III
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

11:30-12:00 Open Forum

12:00-1:00 Lunch
lunch will be provided

1:00-2:00 [Shellfish Biology](#)

Donald Ullstrom
Northeast Regional Shellfish Specialist
FDA

2:00-3:00 [ALERT-FDA's New Food Defense Program](#)

Mary Leong
Retail Food Specialist
FDA

3:00-4:00 Question and Answer Session

Quarterly Meeting

Our third quarterly meeting of the 2006 calendar year will be held on September 20th, at the FDA facility, located at 158 Liberty Ave in Jamaica. Remember, ID is required to gain entrance into the building. Pre-registration is requested, so that we may give your name to the security guard at the gate.

Registration Form 2006 September Meeting

Name _____

Agency/Firm _____

E-mail Address _____

Phone Number _____

Meeting Registration: \$20 (member)

\$30 (non-member)

CASA Membership:

Regulatory Agency- \$15

Academic & Retired Regulatory Member- \$10

Associate Member- \$35 Please make checks payable to NY Conference CASA
Fax Registration form to Alice Peltz (631) 852-5871

Or, mail registration form to:

Alice J. Peltz

Suffolk County Department of Health

360 Yaphank Ave, Suite 2A

Yaphank, New York 11980

Directions to FDA facility :

The FDA building is easily accessible from the Van Wyck Expressway (678) from either north or south. Exit at Liberty Ave. and proceed east for approximately 1 mile. The building will be located on the north side of Liberty Ave. just beyond the Long Island Railroad trestle. Enter through the main gate, identify yourself and announce that you are attending the NY CASA meeting. You will be directed where to park. Enter through the main entrance and proceed to the main floor conference room.