

Henri Boulard Public Health Award 2021: And the winners are...



What's the difference between a Nigerian project which tackles irrational use of antibiotics and educates women about safe contraception method, and a Thai program exploring the alteration of wastewater microbiomes across hospitals and houses in different areas in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic? No idea? Both improve public health by addressing issues linked to the intestinal microbiota. And both won the Henri Boulard Public Health Award 2021!

Starting 2022 with good news for the microbiota realm! The first edition Henri Boulard Public Health Award came to an (happy) end with two winners. Launched in May 2021 by the Biocodex Microbiota Foundation, this new award focuses on programs linked to the intestinal microbiota that have the potential to significantly impact public health at a local level. On the 21st of December 2021, the jury concluded.

Providing safe contraception method and reducing antimicrobial resistance in Nigeria

Odeh Edith, a pharmacist from Nigeria, set up a reproductive health facility to address safe contraception methods and the myths behind use of Ampiclox Capsule, that are used as female contraceptive in Nigeria. Contraceptive use among sexually active women in Nigeria is key to reducing unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. According to the Society of Gynecologists and Obstetricians of Nigeria, 20 000 Nigerian women die from unsafe abortions each year. There is severe misuse of Ampiclox 500mg (Ampicillin Trihydrate and Cloxacillin Sodium) capsule, used irrationally as a birth control method in Nigeria. This irrational antibiotic use is a major public health challenge as it can lead to dysbiosis and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), with a high risk of infection and serious complications. With a team of 14 pharmacists, 4 doctors and volunteers, Odeh Edith provides Nigerian women with adequate knowledge on contraceptive methods, on the proper use of antibiotics, notably Ampiclox, as well as long term consequences of abusing antibiotics. *"Our mission is to inform Nigerian women on safe contraceptive methods, to reduce maternal mortality, to avoid excessive use of*

antibiotics which expose them to the complications of dysbiosis and favorize the emergence Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), said Odeh Edith.

Fighting the spread of COVID-19 in Thailand thanks to wastewater epidemiological surveillance tool

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health problem with varying infectivity, morbidity, and mortality across local communities. Dr. Krit Pongpirul, from Thailand, launches a wastewater-based epidemiology program linking the microbiome profile of virus, fungi, and bacteria for prediction of COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand as an epidemiological surveillance tool. This project aims to explore the alteration of wastewater microbiomes in different areas in Thailand. The wastewater samples collected from randomly selected areas will be assessed for viral, bacterial, and fungal microbiomes by using next-generation sequencing technology. According to Dr. Krit Pongpirul, *“the Henri Boulard Public Health Award provides an excellent opportunity to prove that the wastewater microbiome in the COVID-19 zone exhibits different patterns from a non-COVID-19 zone and that the wastewater microbiome including viruses, fungi, and bacteria presents species-specific profiles in wastewater that can be used for propagation analysis and prediction of the COVID-19.”*

Two €10,000 annual grants for health professionals

With the Henri Boulard Public Health Award, the Biocodex Microbiota Foundation continues its mission to highlight the importance of the microbiota and remind us of its role in current public health issues. Open to all health professionals, the awards highlight projects linked to the gut microbiota. The two best projects are awarded €10,000 each. An independent jury evaluates the proposed projects based on the following criteria:

- Scientifically relevant (clearly linked to the gut microbiota)
- Significant impact on public health
- Meets a local medical need
- Feasible and sustainable
- Replicable in another country

For further information, visit the Foundation’s website:

<https://www.biocodexmicrobiotafoundation.com/henri-boulard-public-health-award/call-for-projects-2021>

Biocodex Microbiota Foundation

Since 2017, the Biocodex Microbiota Foundation has been working to improve science’s understanding of the human microbiota. Each year, the Foundation contributes to the funding of global research on microbiota via grants awarded to innovative scientific research projects. Calls for projects are regularly launched on a specific theme related to the microbiota, with the most promising projects then selected by an international scientific committee made up of independent experts.

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