An Asia Pacific Consensus on Perinatal Nutrition and Breastfeeding

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest the article by Kolitzko et al. [1] on the Early Nutrition Project Recommendations. We agree that the available evidence for relevant consequences of lifestyle, diet, and growth patterns in early life on later health and disease risk is strong. There is an urgent need for optimized perinatal nutrition not just for the affluent populations, such as women and children in Europe, but also for the world especially for the nonaffluent population in Asia. This can contribute to the primary prevention of global obesity and diabetes, both epidemics especially in Asia Pacific regions.

It is thus important to drill down to simpler recommendations globally, such that the ground health-care practitioners and patients everywhere can follow and use. We have an annual Asia Pacific Diabetes in Pregnancy Conference and an Integrated Platform for Research in Advancing Metabolic Health Outcomes of Women and Children (IPRAMHO) Asia-Pacific workshop for the last 2 years [2]. Our group of Asian Pacific health-care practitioners met on January 11 and 12, 2019 in KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore, for this purpose. A total of 18 members from 10 countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Viet-

nam, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Australia) presented their perspectives on perinatal nutrition. At the consensus workshop, questions relating to optimal perinatal nutrition screening were posted. An electronic clicker system was used to collect the responses to the questions. There was active discussion on the responses. A draft consensus was then worked out and circulated among the members for agreement as the final consensus document. The key consensus recommendations on perinatal nutrition and breastfeeding were:

1. Preconception period
 - a. Healthy balanced diet and keeping physically active for all women of child-bearing age.
 - b. Aiming for optimal BMI of 18.5–24.9 kg/m².
 - c. Health professionals to offer advice on the importance of a balanced diet and daily folic acid supplement in preparation for pregnancy.
2. Pregnancy period
 - a. Healthy balanced diet and to avoid excessive eating or extreme dietary restrictions.
 - b. Regular physical activity.
 - c. Appropriate gestational weight gain.
 - d. Folic acid supplementation during the first trimester.

e. Routine iron and calcium supplementation in populations that have high prevalence rates of deficiencies.

3. Postpartum period

a. Breastfeeding, healthy eating, and physical activity as strategies for return to optimal weight.

b. Maintaining optimal weight between pregnancies.

c. Adequate dietary calcium and iron intakes.

4. Breastfeeding

a. Exclusive breastfeeding for up to 6 months for all infants because of its proven benefits for both infants and mothers.

b. Multifaceted approach and/or a co-ordinated program by health-care professionals to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates and start early initiation of breastfeeding.

c. Skin-to-skin contact of mother and infant and breastfeeding within the first hour after birth.

We felt that if the above consensus is widely disseminated and diligently observed, it will greatly contribute to the understanding and reduction of obesity and diabetes globally especially in Asia Pacific. It is agreed that while these consensus statements neither define a standard of care, nor are they intended to dic-

tate an exclusive course of management, they present recognized clinical methods and techniques for consideration by practitioners for incorporation into their practices.

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Author Contributions

K.H.T., T.Y.T.T., M.C.C., and O.K. designed and conducted the study as well as wrote and edited the manuscript. All authors in the consensus group have provided their final approval for submission for publication and are responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole.

- 2 Li LJ, Yu Q; Ipramho-International Study Group, Tan KH. Clinical practice of diabetic pregnancy screening in Asia-Pacific Countries: a survey review. [Acta Diabetol](#). DOI: 10.1007/s00592-019-01331-8.