

Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2015



Dr Luca Tommaso Cavalli-Sforza MD (Milan), MSc (Human Nutrition) (LSTMH)

Former Regional Adviser in Nutrition, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, Manila, The Philippines

Dr Luca Tommaso CAVALLI-SFORZA was born in Milan, Italy on 26th May 1951, and graduated in Medicine in 1976 followed by specialist training in psychiatry and dietetics in Italy and nutrition in London. He further undertook training in epidemiology and public health with particular relevance to the changing patterns of disease. He was well-prepared for the career journey he would take in both community and clinical nutrition and in international health. After appointments in Italy as a Schools Physician and as a Nutrition and Chronic Disease Researcher, he began to work as a Nutrition Advisor to the, Directorate for Development Cooperation in Rome. This provided an opportunity to work in the field in Chengdu, China, where, as a consequence, a Child Nutrition Centre was opened in 1989. By 1991 he had joined WHO (the World Health Organisation) as its Medical Officer/Clinical Nutritionist at the WHO Regional Centre for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and Nutrition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In this post he successfully fostered the discipline of Clinical Nutrition, working with the newly formed Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society (APCNS). In its Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition's inaugural issue, he co-authored a paper on clinical nutrition in East Asia and the Pacific.¹ A notable success in the encouragement of clinical nutrition training was the First National Symposium on Clinical Nutrition in Malaysia which he organised in 1994.² From the Malaysian position, he reached out across Asia and the Pacific to stimulate a wide range of nutritional programs in maternal and child health with a focus on breast-feeding, nutritional anaemia, iodine deficiency disorders (IDD), along with food culture and consumption of dairy products in lactose fermenters as opposed to digesters. The emerging burden of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in the Asia Pacific region also captured his attention.

From 1996-2013, he was able to develop his understanding of the food-health nexus and support programs to prevent and manage nutritionally-related disorder and disease (NDD) as the Regional Director of Nutrition for WHO in the Western Pacific (WPRO). Added to his earlier spectrum of interests were those of food safety and security, intestinal parasitosis and other zoonoses, and capacity-building throughout the region. In the latter respect, he worked closely with IUNS (International Union of Nutrition Sciences) especially in the Philippines, Indochina and South East Asia. Another landmark during this period was the adaptation and promotion of the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines approach of WHO and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation), developed in Cyprus in 1995, for the Western Pacific³ through the strong support of Dr Cavalli-Sforza.

It has been said that the mark of success is how much of what one has done endures into the future. It is already clear that the tenure of Dr Luca Tommaso Cavalli-Sforza in the Asia Pacific Region has advanced for time-to-come the nutrition well-being of its peoples. It is, therefore, fitting that he receive the APCNS Award for 2015.

Citation By
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