



THE
**GOODWOOD
HEALTH SUMMIT**

PRESENTED BY **RAN**DOX
HEALTH

IN ASSOCIATION WITH GOODWOOD AND **NR** NEW RIVER

THE COST OF POOR NUTRITION – FULL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The first Goodwood Health Summit, presented by Randox Health and focused on ‘The Cost of Poor Nutrition’ convened in the Ballroom of Goodwood House with the BBC’s Justin Webb as host. Over 100 delegates prominent in the fields of health and nutrition attended in person, with hundreds more around the world following the debate on the live stream.

Her Grace the Duchess of Richmond opened the event with a quote from the author Barry Groves, that ‘civilised man is the only animal clever enough to manufacture his own food, yet stupid enough to eat it’. She said that she had been inspired to convene the Summit by the ripple effects she has seen from the ‘life-changing’ five-day Goodwood Gut Health Programme, which she founded with clinical nutritional therapist and author Stephanie Moore, supported by organic produce from Goodwood Farm. She said she wanted to supercharge that effect with this Summit, and for delegates to listen, learn, and work together to make a change in the world.

Stephanie Moore said that creating true and lasting change in our physical and mental health is complex: it involves changing policy, legislation, labelling, education and much more. We have to make getting and staying healthy simpler, cheaper, more accessible and – critically – aspirational. We need to learn to value our health before we get sick, and prioritise the quality of our food without alienating those on low incomes. That, she believes, is the only way the NHS will survive. For her, the Summit represents a rare and exciting opportunity to ramp up that conversation, with some of the world’s foremost experts present to deal with these questions, and many more.



SESSION ONE – INFLAMMATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MICROBIOME

Dr James Kinross is a senior lecturer in colorectal surgery and consultant surgeon at Imperial College London. He also leads a team researching how the microbiome influences cancer and other chronic diseases of the gut, and has authored a book, *Dark Matter*, on the subject.

Professor Edward Bullmore, is neuropsychiatrist and neuroscientist at the University of Cambridge and the author of ‘The Inflamed Mind: A Radical New Approach to Depression’, which explores breakthrough new science on the link between depression and inflammation of the body and brain, and how mental disorders can have their root cause in the immune system.

Justin Webb introduced the first panellist: Dr James Kinross, who urged us to put him out of business as a colorectal surgeon with a better understanding of the microbiome which might help prevent the diseases he operates on. He defined the microbiome as a complex ecosystem on and in us which defines our chances of health and without which we cannot have precise, personal healthcare.

Given its significance, James believes that a healthy microbiome is a fundamental human right. But he lamented that we are only beginning to understand its significance just as it is suffering its worst – and possibly irrevocable – damage. The human race is suffering an ‘internal climate crisis’, he said, with the decimation of our own internal ecology. That damage accelerated rapidly after the end of the Second World War with the rise of global migration, industrial food production, the increased use of antibiotics specifically and medicines generally, and the global climate crisis. Our microbiomes acquire an adult construct between the ages of 3 to 5, he said, and the damage already done to them by then will have profound and lasting consequences.



SESSION ONE – INFLAMMATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MICROBIOME CONT.

For James, the complexity of the microbiome and our present lack of understanding of it is analogous to our exploration of deep space. But its significance is slowly gaining mainstream medical acceptance, although it is still seen as niche and more data is required. Current interventions to improve the microbiome, such as faecal microbiota transplantation or FMT, were largely experimental, he said, but would become more precise over time.

But it's not all rocket science. Simple, achievable changes can be made, such as consuming more fibre. And the benefits of understanding and prioritising the microbiome can be world-changing. We can reconceptualize health care to prevent disease rather than treat it, James believes, and protect and preserve the microbiomes of those in developing nations not yet dominated by a westernised, ultra-processed food culture.

The sentiment that conventional medicine can be profoundly conservative was echoed by the next speaker, Professor Edward Bullmore. He described the medical establishment as conservative, hierarchical and patriarchal – the very opposite of the progressive attitudes we now require. The idea, championed by him and others, that our mental and physical health might be linked is massively disruptive, Ed said, because it challenges the 'dualism' between the two so ingrained in our medical system. That dualism influences everything from how our medical professionals are trained, to separate NHS hospital buildings and even computer systems. As a psychiatrist, he was not required to maintain his physical medical skills after qualifying. And that dualism assigns and ingrains a lower status and significance to mental health.



SESSION ONE – INFLAMMATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MICROBIOME CONT.

In recent decades, better data and better imaging have proven that mental health conditions can have physical, observable causes and effects in the body and the brain, and are not just ‘all in the mind’. Yet, for Ed, neither the system nor the therapeutics it prescribes have changed much to reflect this new understanding over the past 20 to 30 years. In some cases, they are worse.

This ‘medical apartheid’ will take years to play out, he told us. But he’s now more convinced that revolution is possible, and the idea that what we consume and how we feel might be linked, which was considered ‘a bit bonkers’ just a decade ago, is becoming increasingly accepted. We are just at the beginning of understanding how physical health, diet and the microbiome are connected to neurodevelopment, and the complexity of these systems is mind-boggling. But he reinforced a theme which was to develop across the Summit: that a focus on the early years is critical for both prevention and intervention, and that child mental health services in the UK are currently ‘dismal’.

He sees some cause for optimism, though, and early signs of medical systems long siloed by unexamined assumptions beginning to show more connectivity. And he emphasised that a better understanding of the biological roots of our mental well-being does not negate our individuality: human beings remain unique and unpredictable.



SESSION TWO – INSULIN, OBESITY AND ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS

Dr Chris van Tulleken is BAFTA-winning broadcaster, a doctor at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London and an Associate Professor at UCL, where his research focuses on how corporations affect human health. He also works with UNICEF and The World Health Organisation on this area.

Jessie Inchauspé is a biochemist, product developer, founder of GlucoseGoddess and the author of Glucose Revolution, an international bestseller translated into 40 languages.

For the second Summit session, Justin Webb was joined on stage by both Chris and Jessie. Chris began by painting a bleak picture of the power and influence of ‘Big Food’ and the ultra-processed foods it produces and promotes, including the observable physical stunting of our children that results. He described the ‘commodification of ill-health’, in which food is produced for profit rather than for nutrition, with those profits permitting the big food corporations to market their products even more effectively, and stifle opposition, competition and regulation.

As a result, poor diet has overtaken tobacco as a cause of death. The epidemiological evidence for its harm is overwhelming, he said, with links to mental illness, cancer, and early deaths of all causes.



SESSION TWO – INSULIN, OBESITY AND ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS CONT.

The food culture we like to think we have, as represented in TV shows and elsewhere in the media, simply doesn't represent reality, he said. Around 80 per cent of food consumed by UK teenagers is now classified as ultra-processed and between 90 and 100 per cent of that eaten by children. Chris said that he had no view on what people should eat, as budgets and cultures vary almost infinitely, but that there needs to be structural change to make good food of all types affordable and accessible. If you give people the opportunity to be healthy, they'll generally take it, he said, and the first step is to fight the poverty that makes cheap, energy-dense ultra-processed food so appealing.

From the floor, we heard about how such companies are adopting the tactics of the tobacco firms to frustrate attempts to limit the harm they do. Chris acknowledged some efforts on their part to improve, and for him the less-acknowledged villains are the politicians who fail to protect us from poor nutrition, and those supposedly independent experts who help to launder the reputation of these firms by taking their money.

The big food companies' money needs to become 'dirty', he said, just as tobacco and now oil money has. Nor can they be allowed to continue privatising the benefits of ill-health and socialising the harms, and their influence must be specifically excluded from the legislative processes by which they should be regulated. We also need to learn from the marketing bans on tobacco, with warning labels that might turn children from being the target of UPF marketing into advocates against its consumption, just as earlier generations of kids pestered their parents to stop smoking.



SESSION TWO – INSULIN, OBESITY AND ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS CONT.

Jessie echoed Chris's disdain for an industry which, in her words, 'sells you a product but takes your health and your money'. She explained just how radically our bodies' reaction to food is changed by processing. Proper education is key in the fight against poor nutrition and health, she said. It's not enough just to tell people to eat less and exercise more, and many people who follow her on Instagram after a type 2 diabetes diagnosis don't have basic understanding of what terms such as fibre and protein mean. But it's also important to show people how and where to start, and make change easy, fun and – appropriately – bite-sized.

She told delegates, with justification, that she'd rather have a can of Diet Coke than a regular Coke or an orange juice (though none represents a healthy option), and host Justin Webb was pleased to hear that a full English breakfast might not be that bad for him. Jessie agreed with Chris on many issues: the need for a revolution in food labelling and marketing, decrying the 'health-washing' effect of terms such as 'vegan' and 'no added sugar'; on the influence that the big food companies exert – in her experience through their deals with social media's more overt influencers; and on the skewed priorities of 'Big Food', where removing fibre to extend the shelf life of a food was more important than the health of the person consuming it.



SESSION THREE – EXPERT PANEL Q&A

In the final session, before questions from the delegates in the room and those watching the live stream, the Summit was honoured to hear from Professor Pekka Puska, the Finnish public health pioneer whose ground-breaking North Karelia Project starting in the 1970s proved that a systemic approach to improving health, involving every aspect of society, from social clubs to the media and big corporations could have measurable impacts on individuals.

He told the Summit that the war on tobacco would look easy by comparison with changing the world's addiction to ultra-processed foods. Tobacco is always bad, he said, but attitudes to food are more complex and nuanced. But there were still lessons to be learned, and he agreed with Dr Chris van Tulleken on the efficacy of marketing bans and the need to exclude food companies from influencing their own regulation. And he struck an optimistic note: people do want to eat better, he said: nobody wants to be obese, but our environments can make it difficult to avoid. Prevention, however, is not only possible but it really pays off.

Our panel then took questions from those in the room, and from Justin Webb on behalf of those watching online. Asked why the physical effects of ultra-processed foods were so much more noticeable in the UK than in other countries, Chris explained that some were simply earlier on this journey than others, or hadn't been targeted as relentlessly yet, or had food cultures more resistant to colonisation by UPFs.



SESSION THREE – EXPERT PANEL Q&A CONT.

Asked about the benefits and likely growth of health data tech such as continuous glucose monitoring, Jessie Inchauspé said that although it can be life-saving, it can also be disconcerting; that users need to know how to interpret it, and that it may not be used by those who need it the most. Stephanie Moore concurred, saying that it can be a useful tool but we shouldn't become obsessed with it, and that it was important to remain in touch with how we feel.

Asked about how we give people, and especially children, a sense of responsibility for their own health, Professor Edward Bullmore agreed that over-monitoring was not useful; that health education had to start early, and that any activity involving movement and thus a connection to and appreciation of our bodies should be encouraged. Jessie agreed, saying that we should educate people to respond better to symptoms, and understand that they are the language our body uses to communicate to us that something may be broken and needs to be fixed with a change more fundamental than a trip to the doctor.

Asked about the influence the financial markets could have on the ultra-processed food manufacturers, Chris said that the divestment seen from tobacco, oil and other 'toxic' stocks probably wasn't helpful: that there would always be someone willing to buy and thus support their share price, and that the continued involvement of activist shareholders was likely to be of value. From the floor, the chef, author and founder of the Wahaca chain Thomasina Miers praised efforts to offer preferential interest rates to farmers who refuse to raise the monocrops which provide the raw material for UPFs.



SESSION THREE – EXPERT PANEL Q&A CONT.

Asked about the key changes they would make to health policy, the panel coalesced around the importance of the early years. Along with more vegetables and local produce, Professor Pekka Puska identified better school lunches as a critical tool in improving nutrition. Stephanie Moore agreed, saying that it was absurd that we feed the most vulnerable in society, such as young children and those in hospital, the worst food. As did Edward, saying that we were overinvesting in people his age and older, and underinvesting in the early years, when intervention has the greatest impact. But the very young don't vote, he noted.

Her Grace the Duchess of Richmond then closed the Summit by thanking the speakers, and urged delegates to use what they'd learnt during the discussions in both their personal lives and their professional practices, and to report back on the changes they'd been able to make.

