

PRESS RELEASE

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HOW TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY PROBIOTIC FOOD AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS? Scientific experts from IPA Europe and the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP) have developed science-based criteria to provide clarity for the proper use of the term probiotic.

For many years, the probiotic sector in Europe has been working proactively to support and encourage responsible production and marketing of probiotic foods and food supplements, as per the latest scientific developments.

IPA Europe has initially developed this voluntary approach which consists of scientific-based criteria as a prerequisite to qualifying “the probiotic category of food and food supplements”. Then, IPA Europe scientific experts have been working in collaboration with the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP) to provide clarity on each criterion and detail how each of these four criteria can be assessed. This is now acknowledged in the [open-access paper](#) “Criteria to qualify microorganisms as ‘probiotic’ in foods and dietary supplements” published in *Frontiers in Microbiology*. This paper describes the minimum criteria that apply to a probiotic strain that will be used in foods and dietary supplements.

Specifically, to be qualified as a probiotic, a strain must be sufficiently characterized and safe for the intended use. It must be supported by at least one positive human clinical trial conducted according to generally accepted scientific standards or as per recommendations and provisions of local/national authorities when applicable. Finally, the strain must be alive

¹ IPA Europe is the European chapter of IPA, the International Probiotics Association; it was established in Brussels in 2015. The members of IPA Europe are Companies directly engaged in the manufacture of probiotic cultures or probiotic foods, supplements, nutritionals or therapeutic products: BioGaia, Chr. Hansen, Danone, DuPont, IPA, Lallemand, Lesaffre, Probi and Yakult. The IPA Europe mission is: to gain acceptance of the term “probiotic” throughout Europe as a defined category and to create a favourable environment for probiotics in Europe. For additional information on IPA Europe’s activities see: <http://ipaeurope.org>

in the product at an efficacious dose throughout shelf life, and Similar criteria may be applicable to other uses of probiotics.

The Authors consider that adherence to these principles will reduce the number of products in the marketplace that misuse the term “probiotic”.

IPA Europe contends that the wide adoption of these criteria is necessary to ensure the proper use of the word probiotic in scientific publications, on product labels, and in communications to regulators and to the general public. Also, the use of the term “probiotic” would then not require an EFSA health assessment, as long as no reference to specific health effect is made.

With the help of experts, IPA Europe members will continue to discuss issues pertaining the interplay between science, nutrition and regulatory issues for probiotics in food and dietary supplements.

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