IN MEMORIAM

A Festschrift to Professor Jane Wardle: Colleague and Pioneer in Obesity Science, Health Behaviour Change and Cancer Research (Born October 30th, 1950, in Oxford; Died October 20th, 2015, London)

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Prof. Jane Wardle. Photo courtesy of family of Prof. Wardle.

Professor Frances Jane Wardle, best known to everyone as Jane, was a clinical psychologist and behavioural scientist whose research interests spanned cancer prevention, treatment and diagnosis as well as obesity, healthy eating and eating disorders. She was Director of the CRUK Health Behaviour Research Centre at UCL for more than 20 years, and during this time, she mentored many colleagues, supervised more than 40 PhD students and published more than 700 peer-reviewed papers. At the core of her research was the importance of behaviour in determining health outcomes, whether expressed in her Behavioural Susceptibility theory to understand the gene-environment interactions which promote

obesity in children; or the Top Ten Tips developed to change habits to assist in weight loss; or indeed, the behavioural approaches needed to encourage uptake of bowel cancer screening. Jane also published on the nature of happiness with her husband Professor Andrew Steptoe, finding that an individual's happiness and enjoyment of life influences physical health, risk of illness and survival.

Jane gained a BA degree in Psychology and Physiology at St Anne's College, Oxford in 1973. This was followed by training at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, to become a clinical psychologist, and there, she held a lectureship whilst still very young (aged 26) at the same time continuing clinical work at the Maudsley Hospital. In 1991, she joined the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Health Behaviour Unit which was moved to the University College London in 1996, becoming its Director in 1997.

I first met Jane in the late 1980s, in her office whilst she was at the Institute of Psychiatry. We discussed our joint interests in eating disorders. Back then, I was an early career researcher, and she was very welcoming with an invitation to give a departmental talk on food addiction. Her questions were incisive, clever and challenging. Over the years, we shared an interest in the genetics of obesity, and in how food preferences are formed in early life. We always had lively conversations; in particular, I recall very well her sharp wit and sharper still intelligence. On one occasion at an ASO meeting in Liverpool, we met at breakfast where we talked science mostly, but in the midst of this conversation, she mentioned her tumultuous upbringing. It turned out that far from the privileged background I expected to hear about, Jane had often been left alone to fend for herself and her two younger brothers. She had what we might politely describe as an unconventional childhood. She and her brothers were taken into care for a time, and she attended 13 schools before persuading Mary Warnock at Oxford High School to accept her as a pupil

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aged 16, whilst also waiving the school fees! I was astonished to learn that Jane had experienced such challenges, since to the world she appeared so strong and resourceful. But then, perhaps having survived such adversity, this demonstrated her underlying resilience, or provided the motivation behind it.

In any case, Jane was not content to specialise only in one area; she expanded her interests beyond eating disorders to obesity and health behaviour change promoting many aspects of healthy living. It is remarkable that she led a pioneering research programme in one area of health and wellbeing enhancing our understanding of obesity, and at the same time, she also directed a cancer screening, prevention and treatment programme. To succeed in one of these is a considerable feat, and to manage both is an outstanding achievement. Many of us have marvelled at Jane's ability to be so productive, heading such a large, eminent and successful team and at the same time, raising a family and being a supportive friend and mentor. Her unique contribution to science has been recognised through her election to both the British Academy and to the Academy of Medical Sciences, and in 2014, she received the British Psychological Society award for outstanding contribution to research. The many touching obituaries that have been written about Jane mention in equal measure her warmth, great sense of humour and serious scientific mind.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to edit a series of invited papers within this issue from colleagues in the field

of obesity to commemorate her work in this discipline. From these papers, it is hoped that the reader will gain an appreciation of the immense debt we owe to Jane Wardle in the area of obesity research and eating behaviour in childhood, and at the same time, to acknowledge the ways in which this research has translated into strategies to promote healthy eating, to achieve and maintain weight loss and to seek a healthier, happier life.

Papers:

1. Croker H. & Beeken R. "Applied Interventions in the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity through the Research of Professor Jane Wardle". *Curr Obes Rep* 2017;6:10.1007/s13679-017-0249-8 (in this issue)
2. Gibson E.L & Cooke L. "Understanding Food Fussiness and Its Implications for Food Choice, Health, Weight, and Interventions in Young Children: The Impact of Professor Jane Wardle". *Curr Obes Rep* 2017;6:10.1007/s13679-017-0248-9 (in this issue)
3. Hill A.J. "Obesity in Children and the 'Myth of Psychological Maladjustment': Self-Esteem in the Spotlight". *Curr Obes Rep* 2017;6:10.1007/s13679-017-0246-y (in this issue)
4. Llewellyn C.H. & Fildes A. "Behavioural Susceptibility Theory: Professor Jane Wardle and the Role of Appetite in Genetic Risk of Obesity". *Curr Obes Rep* 2017;6:10.1007/s13679-017-0247-x (in this issue)