



Program Annual Symposium of the Belgian Nutrition Society
18/09/2026 - Galilee Auditorium at SPF, Galilee Building
The interplay between nutrition and brain health
Final version July 7 2026

Welcome Session

8.30 – 9.00: Registration

9.00 – 9.15: Presentation of the scientific program: Yvan Larondelle (UCLouvain)

Session 1: Chair: Vicky De Preter (UCLL)

9.15 – 9.55: Lukas Van Oudenhove (KU Leuven): *Small Molecules, Big Impact? - Short-chain fatty acids as microbiota-gut-brain axis mediators of human psychophysiology*

9.55 – 10.30: 2 selected oral presentations

- 9.55 – 10.07: Gabriël Eksteen (KU Leuven) - *Long-term protein requirements measured by the Indicator Amino Acid Oxidation method are elevated after Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery in adult men*
- 10.07 – 10.12: Questions
- 10.12 – 10.24: Bo Batens (UHasselt) - *The impact of a flavonoid-rich diet on the microbiome and inflammatory profile in multiple sclerosis*
- 10.24 – 10.30: Questions

10.30 – 10.50: Flash presentations of 12 posters

Poster session 1 and Coffee break

Session 2: Chair: Jean-Charles Preiser (ULB)

11.20 – 12.00: Amandine Everard (UCLouvain): *Gut microbes and reward-related eating behaviors*

12.00 – 12.35: 2 selected oral presentation

- 12.00 – 12.12: Samira Awel (UGent) - *Deuterium-measured breastmilk intake and early growth trajectories among small vulnerable newborns versus community controls*
- 12.12 – 12.17: Questions
- 12.17 – 12.29: Vellemans Sarah (UCLouvain) - *Bioavailability of punicic acid from pomegranate seed oil: in vitro and in vivo evidence*
- 12.29 – 12.35: Questions

12.35 – 12.55: Flash presentations of 12 posters

Poster session 2 and lunch break



Session 3: Chair: Isabelle Moyerson (Sciensano)

14.10 – 14.50: Fabio Taccone (HUBrussels, Belgium): *Energy substrates for the injured brain*

14.50 – 15.25: 2 selected oral presentations

- 14.50 – 15.02: Claire Cauwelier (UCLouvain) - *The impact of gluten and kappa-carrageenan on gut and metabolic health: experimental approach in high-fat diet fed mice*
- 15.02 – 15.07: Questions
- 15.07 – 15.19: Chona F. Patalen (UGent) - Elevated remnant cholesterol despite desirable LDL-cholesterol:
- 15.19 – 15.25: Questions

Poster session 3 and Coffee break

Closing session: Chair: Carl Lachat (UGent)

16.00 – 16.40: Charlotte De Backer (UAntwerpen): ***From Nutrients to Narratives: Why communication about, around and through food matters for health outcomes***

16.40 – 17.00: BNS prizes for best communication (oral and poster) and upcoming events (BNS board)



Abstracts – KeyNote Speakers

Lukas Van Oudenhove

Small Molecules, Big Impact?

Short-chain fatty acids as microbiota-gut-brain axis mediators of human psychophysiology

I will first introduce the concept of humans as holobionts and give an overview of the bidirectional microbiota-gut-brain axis pathways through which the gut and its microbiota can impact brain function. I will then zoom in on the role of the microbial metabolites short-chain fatty acids as key microbiota-gut-brain axis mediators. After briefly introducing their synthesis and local gut effects, I will focus on two of their key properties that may explain their neuroactive effects. First, their role as epigenetic modulators will be highlighted and illustrated with our human data on their impact on stress physiology. Second, their anti-neuroinflammatory effects will be presented. The potential relevance of both these effects for major depressive disorder will be discussed. Finally, new human data on the impact of short-chain fatty acid on GLP-1 and PYY-mediated gut-brain signaling will be shown.

Charlotte De Backer

From Nutrients to Narratives: Why communication about, around and through food matters for health outcomes

Food is never just fuel to the physical body. It is embedded in stories, relationships, rituals, and moral judgments. Research on food, communication, and health has traditionally focused on communication *about* food: dietary guidelines, risk messages, health promotion campaigns, and what influencers and laypeople share online and offline. In the first part of this lecture, I explain why communication about food is so prominent and why it so often becomes polarized.

In the second part, I argue that this perspective, while necessary, is incomplete. Food is not only talked about; food itself also communicates. Foods and mealtimes express care, identity, belonging, power, and exclusion. Health outcomes are therefore shaped not only by what people eat or how they talk about food, but also by the meaning food carries within social relationships. I highlight why health scientists and food practitioners must consider eating habits within their interpersonal and cultural contexts, as the Belgian Superior Health Council guidelines now also incorporate these dimensions.

Food is about nutrition as much as it is about sociality. The two are fundamentally inseparable.