

RISK CHARACTERIZATION OF CIGUATERA FOOD POISONING IN EUROPE GP/EFSA/FSCO/2015/03

EuroCigua



BACKGROUND

Ciguatera Food Poisoning (CFP) is the most common type of marine biotoxin food poisoning worldwide. In Europe, autochthonous CFP outbreaks have been reported in Spain (Canary Islands) and in Portugal (Madeira). The epidemiological Surveillance System for CFP in the Canary Islands recorded 17 indigenous outbreaks between 2008 and 2016, accounting for 111 cases. In the case of Madeira, an outbreak of the illness was reported in 2008, due to consumption of amberjack fish caught in local waters. Presence of microalgae *Gambierdiscus* spp. has been described in other European Mediterranean waters. Other EU countries have experienced outbreaks and cases of ciguatera due to the consumption of contaminated fish imported from endemic areas. Although there are still many gaps in knowledge regarding the prevalence of the disease as well as the type of toxin involved in the intoxications, all these findings suggest that CFP is becoming an increasing risk for European consumers.

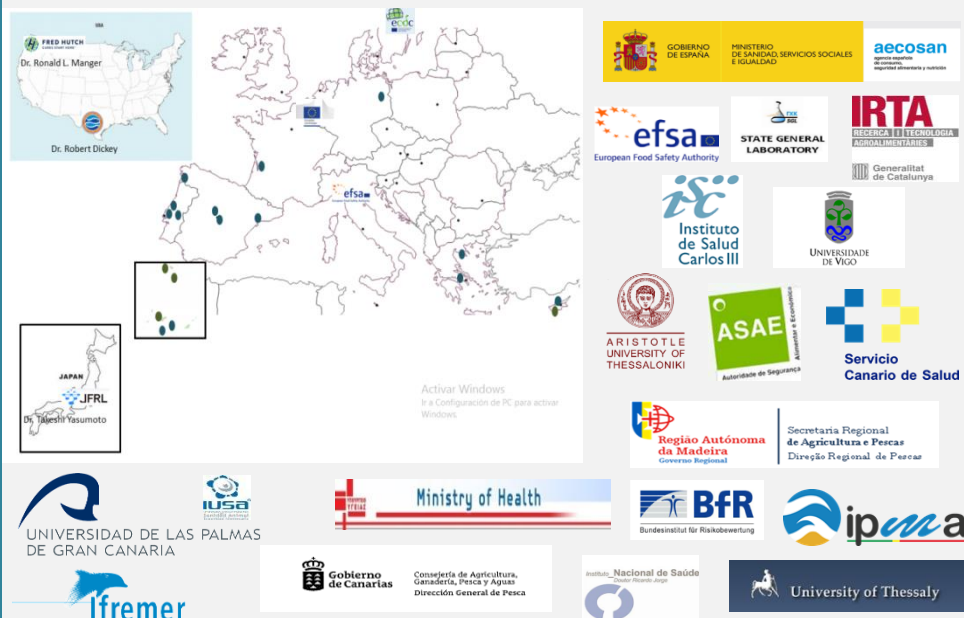


THE PROJECT

The project is co-funded by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), it was launched on June 2016 and will be completed in September 2020. It is implemented through a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) composed of four independent Specific Agreements (SA) with specific goals, tasks and deliverables. EuroCigua focuses on the characterization of the risk of Ciguatera Food Poisoning (CFP) in Europe by the establishment of a ciguatera case definition and the identification of data sources for outbreaks and cases of this illness in order to estimate the incidence of the disease in the European Union and the epidemiological characteristics of cases. For the characterization of the ciguatoxins the project will develop materials and validate methods for the detection, quantification and confirmation of the presence of ciguatoxin in the culture of microalgae and in contaminated fish samples in European waters and finally characterize the chemical structures of CTX-group toxins. EuroCigua Project will continuously look for collaborators therefore all initiatives, synergies and information related to CFP in Europe are welcomed.

THE TEAM

Fourteen organizations from 6 Member States are part of the consortium. The Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition (AECOSAN) is the coordinator of the project, the Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII), the Institute for Research and Technology in Food and Agriculture (IRTA) and the University of Vigo are coordinators of the specific agreements and the partners are the Portuguese Authority for Food and Economic Safety (ASAE), Instituto Nacional de Saúde Doutor Ricardo Jorge, I.P., the University of Thessaly, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), the Canary Health Service, the University of las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), the Portuguese Institute for the Ocean and Atmosphere (IPMA), the State General Laboratory (SGL), the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The collaborators include the Ministry of Health (Nicosia Cyprus), Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Water, The Canary Islands Government, the Natural Park of Madeira and Direção Regional das Pescas de Madeira. An Advisory Board is included in the project, as a consulting body composed of external experts from EEUU and Japan, and European organizations as the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Foods Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission (EC) with the main objective of advising the consortium and assisting on specific issues.



TITLE: Risk Characterization of Ciguatera Food Poisoning in Europe. GP/EFSA/AFSCO/2015/03

DURATION: June 2016 to September 2020.

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