

International Symposium 2-5

Gut flora and multiple sclerosis

Takashi Yamamura

Director, Department of Immunology, National Institute of Neuroscience,
National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry

During the past decades, we have witnessed the remarkable increase of patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) in Japan, the autoimmune disease of the brain. We have hypothesized that westernization of our life style, which might cause alterations of gut commensal flora, may account for the increase of MS. Supportive for this, rodent studies have revealed the critical role of gut flora in prevention or augmentation of autoimmune diseases such as experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis. Basic and clinical implications of available data and of our new results will be discussed with regard to future research directions.