



Microbial Modelling and Risk Analysis (MMRA) Professional Development Group

The mission of the Microbial Modelling and Risk Analysis (MMRA) Professional Development Group (PDG) is to facilitate communication specifically on the topics of predictive modelling (PM) and quantitative microbial risk assessment (QMRA). It further encourages research and data reporting methods to support PM and MRA and promote their applications and use.

Our PDG counts almost 500 members and continues to grow every year in number and diversity of members across the world. A multi-actor involvement is ensured by representatives from the food industry, academia, and government, who meet physically (or virtually) every year at the PDG meeting prior to the IAFP Annual Meeting and exchange knowledge, establish collaboration opportunities, and formulate ideas for symposia, roundtables and workshops for the next Annual Meeting and European symposium. Every year, 8–10 symposia and roundtables are sponsored by MMRA PDG and attract a considerable audience. Of note is also the 1–2 webinars in relevant topics throughout the year. Preparation of proposals can be further facilitated through the interactive PDG community page in IAFP Connect, where members can also access past meeting minutes and informative material shared at the annual PDG meetings, including the presentations of invited speakers.

The high expertise of our PDG members offers a continuous update of the MMRA community with the state-of-the-art in a rapidly changing world. The fields of PM and QMRA

are gaining a lot of attention worldwide and support risk-based decisions about food safety problems, development of safe product formulation and source attribution. The advances in data analytics and computational biology, including big data handling and machine learning, as well as the increasingly new insights in-omics era have markedly contributed to the establishment of perspectives for integrating -omics in QMRA. The user-friendly software tools, explicitly demonstrated in 2 symposia (2017 and 2019), has paved the way for more routine use of predictive modeling principles by the industry and the authorities (e.g., assessing product compliance and shelf life). The above topics constitute a unique repository of ideas that can be distilled into webinars, symposia, and roundtables. To motivate students, our PDG has also established 2 student awards for the top MMRA abstracts, via a diligent selection process, by a 3- to 5-member judging committee, that are presented at the annual PDG meeting, along with a flash presentation by the recipients, on site.

We invite you to join our PDG and liaise with other PDGs for acquiring spherical knowledge of food safety approaches. If you would like to learn more, or are interested to be added on our list, please do not hesitate to contact MMRA PDG Chair Panos Skandamis (pskan@aua.gr) or Vice Chair Sofia Santillana-Farakos (Sofia.SantillanaFarakos@fda.hhs.gov).

Panagiotis N. Skandamis, Chairperson