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## Chemistry and Hygiene of Food Additives: Health Consequences for Consumers

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Deadline for manuscript submissions:

**closed (30 April 2024)**

### Message from the Guest Editors

Additives fulfill several useful functions in food, some of which are essential to preserve hygienic, nutritional or sensory qualities, since food is exposed throughout the food chain to numerous factors that can alter it. The functions of additives include preserving nutritional value; improving the quality or shelf stability of a food or its organoleptic properties, provided that it is not misleading; and helping in the manufacture, transformation, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport or storage of food. In Europe, only additives authorized by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) can be used; prior to their use, these are subjected to a very rigorous evaluation and authorization process in order to guarantee their safety. However, and given the "bad press" they enjoy, the food industry, in its attempt to satisfy consumer demands with 100% natural foods, is looking for other substances: for example, the extracts of aromatic plants with antioxidant and preservative purposes. Yet, one might wonder, are these natural substances as effective in guaranteeing the hygienic and nutritional quality of food as chemical additives?



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**Special** Issue



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## Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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