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## The review of the Italian association of psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunology

Edited by Francesco Bottaccioli

# PNEI NEWS

The new knowledge of science and health

## VIS MEDICATRIX NATURAE

The healing force of nature



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**EDITORIAL**

**Page 3. The healing force of Nature.**

*Francesco Bottaccioli*

**INTERVIEW: DIET AND INFLAMMATION**

**Page 4. Assessing the inflammatory index of food.**

The Dietary Inflammatory Index (DII) is the first attempt to quantify the impact of a diet on inflammation.

A dialogue with James Hebert and Nitin Shivappa, the two researchers who are testing their method around the world.

*Paola Emilia Cicerone*

**VIS MEDICATRIX NATURAE**

**Page 7. News on the role of vitamin C in the treatment of pain**

Ascorbic acid has been reported to increase endorphins levels as well as pain threshold in all pain syndromes.

*Mauro Bologna*

**Page 11. Nutraceuticals and dietary supplements: uses and differences.**

The growing interest for nutraceuticals, dietary supplements and functional food may be due to a major awareness about the drugs' side and collateral effects that can compromise their intake on the long run.

*Antonio Santini, Ettore Novellino*

**NUTRITION IN THE EARLY STAGES OF LIFE AND ADULTHOOD'S DISEASES**

**Page 14. The paradox of underweight newborns: candidates for obesity in adulthood**

The cause of obesity is over eating. Appetite regulation is developed during the perinatal period. According to some studies alterations in nutrition occurring during the fetal period are responsible for the low birth weight and can alter the development of the nervous circuits regulating the appetite, thus generating individuals who are prone to obesity.

*Giuseppe Marzulli*

**NARRATIVE MEDICINE**

**Page 17. The body tells: care of oneself and care of the other**

Narrative medicine strengthens the clinical practice to acknowledge, absorb, metabolize, interpreting and being sensitized to the stories of the disease. It helps doctors, nurses, social operators and therapists to improve effectively their medical care by developing the ability of attention, reflection, representation and affiliation with patients and colleagues. (Charon 2017).

*Marisa Del Ben, Nicoletta Sutter*

**BOOKS REVIEW**

## EDITORIAL

### The healing force of Nature

Francesco Bottaccioli – Master Director of Pnei, University of Aquila and University of Turin

In the past the concept of “*Vis medicatrix naturae*” has been used by homeopaths, naturopaths and alternative medicine operators to attack conventional medicine which was accused to ignore the two main factors allowing health recovery: the organism’s bio-psychological resources and the copious supply of natural products with low toxicity and high healing power. For the entire Twentieth Century official medicine counter-attacked the supporters of the healing power of nature accusing them of vitalism.

Nowadays the dispute has lost its character of a strongly ideological war between the extremists of both sides and it has gained a growing solid scientific evidence. Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology<sup>1</sup> has already reported how the internal resources of an ill person promote health recovery or, in any case, a reduction of the pathogenic charge. Pnei has also provided the scientific interpretive framework explaining the mechanisms set up by the individual’s psychological and biological forces that affect the health-disease balance. In today’s times of populist propaganda about mandatory vaccination and no possibility of discussion, Pnei paradigm can also explain phenomena that have been currently hushed up such as the disappearance in the western countries of the big infectious epidemics of the past. Plague, cholera and tuberculosis disappeared in absence of vaccination but with a substantial improvement of the health/work conditions and of antimicrobial therapies

There is nothing anti-scientific about tracing, rely on and potentiate the health resources of the individuals. On the contrary it is anti-scientific that kind of approach that negates the preventive and therapeutic value of these subjective and collective dimensions while relying totally upon a pharmacological sector which is strongly spoiled by corporate interests<sup>2</sup>.

The studies about natural products are achieving interesting levels of scientific evidence thus allowing the therapist to use products, methods and a set of knowledge becoming more and more refined and surprising.

Today we know that diet can be a powerful tool of regulation of the biological systems. The most recent news in this field is described in the interview granted to us by James Hebert and Nitin Shivappa from the University of South Carolina. According to their discoveries it is now possible to measure the degree of diet induced inflammation through a “Dietary Inflammation Index” which is currently being tested in countries around the world, including Italy.

Soon we will have at our disposal an extremely practical tool able to calibrate the diet for each single patient. Studies are also proving that nature’s treasures used by a respectful science and technology can be found in the most humble products such as an apple...hence substantiating the famous proverb “one apple a day...”

In this issue, on their nutraceuticals review, the pharmacologists of the University of Naples Federico II describe their experimental research about the effectiveness of the Annurca apple extract in reducing the LDL cholesterol and increasing the HDL-C. Lastly, our President Mauro Bologna evaluates the studies regarding the pain-killing effect of vitamin C. A great vitamin that has been badly treated by scientists who used to bring it up as an example of popular credulity about the effectiveness of natural substances. Among the gullible people there have been also Nobel Prizes for chemistry, like Linus Pauling, who obviously was not recommending to drink orange juice for cancer treatment but reported how high concentrations of vitamin C can modulate different biological systems, including the immune system<sup>3</sup>.

Now we know that ascorbic acid modulates the production of endorphins, the main molecules with analgesic effects.

All good news for the advancement of integrative healthcare!

1. Bottaccioli F, Bottaccioli AG (2017) *Psiconeuroendocrinoimmunologia e scienza della cura integrata. Il Manuale*, Edra, Milano
2. Garattini S (2016) The European Medicines Agency is still too close to industry *BMJ* 353:i2412 doi: 10.1136/bmj.i2412
3. For the recent development about the use of vitamin C in cancer treatment see Bottaccioli, Bottaccioli, cit. p. 629