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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

**They used to call them “happy pills”.
The era of pharmacological monotherapy for
depression has come to its end. Now it is the time
to introduce integrated therapies.**

Ledoux reconsiders the world of emotions

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INTERVIEW with Joseph Ledoux

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Ledoux is considered one of the best contemporary neurobiologists. He is also singer and guitarist in the Amygdaloids, a unique rock band. In this exclusive interview Ledoux explains to us the last interesting changes of his point of view on emotions.

Paola Emilia Cicerone.

DOSSIER

Depression: change of route in the treatment.

Page 6. The king is naked. The happy pills myth has fallen.

The 24th November the famous researcher will hold a lecture in Milano at the conference on depression organized by SIPNEI. Here he will explain to us how he came to his conclusions that antidepressants are a little bit more than placebo pills.

Irving Kirsch

Page 8. The antidepressants' hidden side.

One of the many antidepressants' side effects is the high rate of sexual dysfunctions. In spite of being such a frequent collateral effect, a proper attention to this incidence has been neglected until recent years.

Alberto Chiesa

Page 10. Depression is a matter of style.

In a context where social and working conditions are not suitable for mankind, the use of drugs or psychoactive substances seems to be an important determinant of the onset of depressive disorders.

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The interesting experience of a small group of patients who received an integrated treatment for mood disorders based on the so-called 4 steps programme: cleanse, drain, detoxify, lose weight.

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NEUROSCIENCES. The brain and the circuits of morality.

Page 17. The neural bases of moral behaviour.

An investigation on the area of the brain involved in moral behaviour. This cerebral circuit is only partially known. It is characterized by cortical and subcortical anatomical structures and it is modulated by neurotransmitters and hormonal systems.

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A short consideration inspired by reading some books.

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Francesco Bottaccioli

EDITORIAL

DEPRESSION: A CHANGE OF ROUTE IN THE TREATMENT

The 24th November Congress will also mark the beginning of the “Science of Integrated Care” programme.

David Lazzari, SIPNEI President

If I had to select just one word to describe the health vision generated by PNEI in these last years, my choice would be the term “integration”: in fact human reality is like an integrated network of biological, psychological and socio-relational phenomena. It is not a coincidence that the studies on stress proved that an optimal degree of it increases the psychophysiological integration and the individual’s performance whereas either an excessive amount of stress or the lack of it triggers a decrease on the ability of the individual (seen globally as a system) to work in an integrated way. It appears therefore obvious that if health and its disturbances (disorders, syndromes, diseases) present these characteristics, then the treatment must be able to respect this integration without ignoring it nor getting lost in it. This is a very crucial point. Many are bewildered by the PNEI approach thinking that is difficult if not impossible accomplishing the task of integrating and hence providing an effective care. I believe that the meaning of the words can help us in finding an answer. Let us consider the terms “simple, complicated and complex”. The three of them have the same Indo-European root “plek” which means pleat, fold, weaving. So *sim-plex* means without folds or hidden parts, simple; *cum-plicatus* means with folds or hidden parts, complicated; *cum-plexus* means with weaving, complex. Thus we need to be able to explicate i.e. unfolding complicated phenomena by using an analytical approach while keeping a comprehensive look in order to see the weaving of the complexity.

This is exactly the added value of PNEI: providing the framework that enables us to tackle complex problems in a clear way for us and the ones we want to help. Since the Orvieto Congress we have launched the ICS (Integrated Care Science) programme in order to support this perspective in different fields. This programme includes the Master for Integrated Management of Stress from a PNEI's view organized by the University of Perugia. In January-February 2013 there will be the announcement of a competitive exam for level I and II; a PNEI ID research project on stress (information will be soon available); and the first of a series of conferences on integrating cares in the treatment of different pathologies. We are talking about the main theme of this issue: the 24th November meeting in Milano about depression. We want to understand the interweaving of the depression in order to adapt the wide range of effective therapeutic resources to the individual's needs.

Data confirm the importance of this theme: in the recent years there has been a steady increase in the depressive disorders and the consumption of antidepressant drugs like a downward spiral. The issue here is not to make a choice based on preconceived ideas about therapies, but to go beyond labels in order to understand the causal factors and dynamics that can lead an individual to live a more or less severe condition of depression.

There is an interaction among the individual's life experiences and the genetic-epigenetic and psychological vulnerability. Nowadays we know that this interweaving of factors follows a recognizable pattern with its specific modalities. Only by adopting such comprehensive vision will we gain that sense, that Ariadne's thread which can lead the individual out of a depression.

Looking forward to meeting you at the SIPNEI appointment in Milano!