

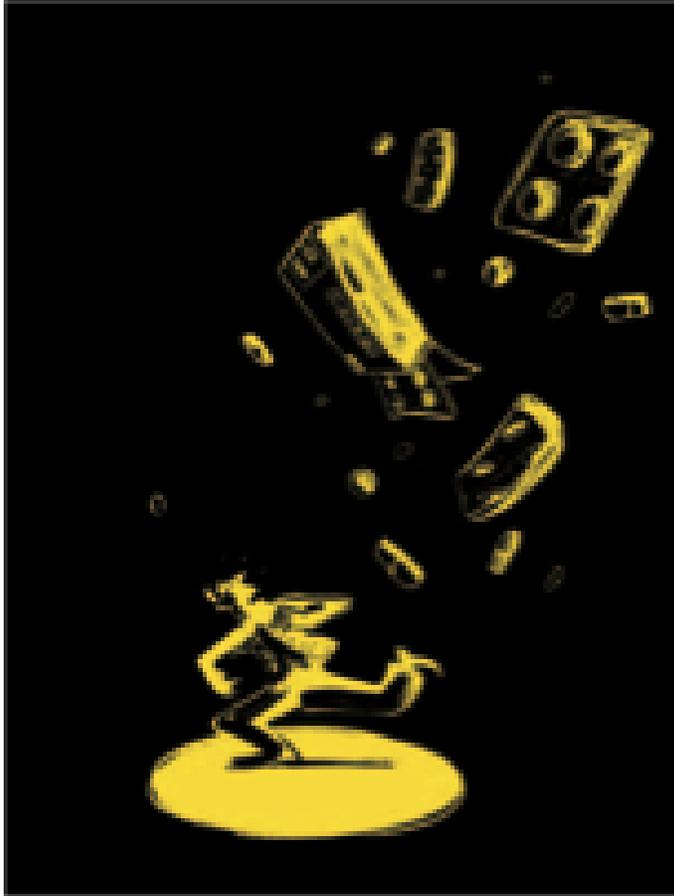
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The review of the Italian association of psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunology

Edited by Francesco Bottaccioli

PNEI NEWS

The new knowledge of science and health



THE FALL OF THE GODS AND THE COMING OF NEW MONSTERS

The new guidelines have demolished the myths of cholesterol, calcium supplements and the limit to exceed 140 mm/Hg for blood pressure. However new traps are already advancing.

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EDITORIAL

Page 3. The fall of the gods and the coming of new monsters

Francesco Bottaccioli

THE FALL OF THE GODS

Page 4. Cholesterol myth crushed into dust. The dogma of the “less is better”

According to the new American guidelines, there is not anymore a direct link between cholesterol and cardiovascular risk. They all belong to a complex net of factors that needs to be understood in its individual entirety. It is indeed a radical turn and it is not devoid of risks either.

Christian Pristipino

Page 6. Persons aged over 60 can exceed 150.

The new guidelines for hypertension

The Joint National Committee work was based on the review and critical analyses of only random control trials that have been published in the last 10 years. The conclusions get rid of strange diagnostic terms such as “pre-hypertension” which were used in order to sell more pills.

Anna Giulia Bottaccioli

Page 8. The inflammatory components of depression.

Since more than 20 years, a stream of research lead by Michael Maes and Robert Dantzer support the inflammatory hypothesis of depressive syndrome. What are the possible sources of inflammation? And what are the paths to recovery?

Andrea Delbarba

DOSSIER

EARLY LIFE PROGRAMMING

Interview with Michael Meaney

Page 10. How our epigenetic story has begun.

The secret of his research lies on waiting. He spent long hours by observing mother rats attending their offspring. These observations were the starting point for his famous studies on stress, mother’s care and genic expression.

Paola Emilia Cicerone

Page 12. The first steps of Epigenetic.

The study of early life programming is living a happy scientific period. It is only at its beginning and it is already anticipating important and exciting developments: the cooperation between psychological and sociological research with molecular biology.

Francesco Bottaccioli

Page 15. At the origin of emotions. Early mentalization in children's affect regulation.

Rosario Savino

WOMEN AND PAIN

Page 18. Stress and inflammation: Pathogenesis of the chronic pelvic pain in women.

Chronic pelvic pain pathologies may present different symptoms according to different factors. However they have a common pathogenesis: a neurogenic inflammation whose recovery can not rely on a single medication.

Marina Risi

Page 20. Sensorimotor psychotherapy for pelvic pain treatment.

In the last years psychotherapists and sexologists dealing with uro-gynecological problems have increasingly confirmed this revelation. The proposal of a sensorimotor psychotherapy represents an integrated approach for post-traumatic disorders linked also to dysregulated affects.

Maria Puliatti

Page 22. An integrated approach to the intimate wellbeing of the woman.

The recent conference on female urogenital syndromes has challenged our capacity to receive different concepts although it has contributed to motivate all the operators to search for new and more effective therapeutic approaches.

Marisa Martinelli

Books

Page 23. Epigenetic and Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology.

EDITORIAL

The fall of the gods and the coming of new monsters

Francesco Bottaccioli – Sipnei Founder and Honorary President

Fifteen years ago during a conference held at Città della Scienza (City of Science Museum) in Naples, a woman from the audience asked whether a too low level of cholesterol was bad. The cardiologist on the stage answered that it was not bad at all, it was rather an advantage since, as far as cholesterol is concerned, less is better!

I responded that it seemed strange to me that a molecule produced by our body was treated as an enemy, an intruder, to be reduced to the smallest amount or even to be eliminated, if possible. I remarked that the “bad” cholesterol was useful not only for the metabolism but also to produce the so-called steroid hormones, to give stability to biological membranes and perhaps many other functions that were still unknown to us.

In the next pages, Christian Pristipino comments the new guidelines from the *American Heart Association* that demolish the centrality of cholesterol whose level does not involve anymore an inevitable medication. This is indeed a clamorous collapse. The cholesterol god has been crushed into dust: its numbers do not define anymore the borderline between health and disease, between those who risk a heart attack or a stroke and those who can be considered safe, below the threshold.

In the same timeframe also other gods have fallen: first of all the calcium supplements.

They have been administered for decades as if they were loaves of bread to middle-age men and women (especially to women) to prevent or treat osteoporosis. Now it is clear that not only they are ineffective for the health of our bones but they are most likely harmful for the heart. A meta-analysis from 2010¹ came to this conclusion which was then reconfirmed by another meta-analysis in 2013². Other studies show negative effects only for men but not for women. Even if we are missing a definitive conclusion – and considering the poor benefits – it is advisable that physicians discourage the intake of calcium supplements as the *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote³.

The last fall regards the classification of hypertension described at pages 6-7 by Anna Giulia Bottaccioli. The new guidelines do not only demolish the blood pressure borderline of 140 mm Hg for people aged over 60, they also get rid of the deceitful category labeled as “pre-hypertension”, namely being more or less close to the 140 threshold, which was used as a way to sell antihypertensive drugs in abundance.

Are all of these good news? Unfortunately the sky is not as clear from clouds as it might seem. Let us consider the cholesterol issue. The new guidelines indicate the administration of anti-cholesterol drugs or better to say statins (as only statins are recommended) not anymore according to the total level of cholesterol or LDL cholesterol, but rather according to the calculation of a risk that a person runs to develop an atherosclerotic heart disease or a stroke within 10 years. This calculation is done on the basis of a “risk-calculator”. Let us make some examples taken from what is considered a very reliable source: the *New England Journal of Medicine*⁴.

According to the calculator, a non-smoker 62 year-old man presenting a total cholesterol of 140 mg/dl, a HDL (the so-called good cholesterol) of 35 mg, not suffering of high-blood pressure nor diabetes, has a high risk percentage depending on his age and the low level of HDL and therefore, hear this, he should be treated with a statins therapy at high intensity. Frankly it is a paradox: lowering an already low level of cholesterol?

Again, there is the example of a non-smoker 70 year-old woman, her total cholesterol is 170, a good level of HDL (50), no high-blood pressure nor diabetes. This woman should be treated at the highest level because she is more than 70 years old!

There are also examples for middle-aged people. The conclusion is that according to these criteria, 45 millions middle-aged or elderly Americans who do not present an ongoing atherosclerotic heart disease should be administered statins⁵.

What a slaughter for the health and the wallets of the citizens! And what a boon for Big Pharma!