

Translation by Patrizia Rustichelli-Stirgwolt

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 heart immune system



Special issue: Is the brain altruistic?

Pnei News – bimonthly review – nr 4-5 – year IX – July – October 2015

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Francesco Bottaccioli

EDITORIAL 1

The upcoming conference in Turin: an opportunity for the advancement of Medical Science and Schools of Medicine.

Ezio Ghigo

Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Disease at "Città della Salute e della Scienza" of Turin, University of Turin; Director of the School of Medicine, University of Turin

Laura Gianotti

Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases, Croce and Carle Hospital of Cuneo; Professor of Psycho-neuro-endocrinology, Department of Psychology, undergraduate degree course in Body-Mind Sciences, University of Turin

Meetings normally foster great opportunities.

We met Francesco Bottaccioli last year in September, during the III Congress in Clinical Endocrinology organized by the Italian Society of Endocrinology. This encounter sealed the alignment among endocrinology, sciences investigating the brain-body connections and psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunology.

It was a stimulating cultural and scientific event which laid down the foundations of a new relationship involving medical, psychological and philosophical sciences which resulted in the upcoming conference in Turin "Health knowledge and care of the individual as a whole".

As medical doctors and researchers we were enthusiastic about the proposal made by Bottaccioli to organize an event of such scope. This conference is important for the School of Medicine as it gives a real and tangible sign that this direction is finally embracing medicine as a science for human beings seen as a whole: body, mind, psyche interacting with each others.

The conference's goal is to outline a map that allows an agreement among medical, psychological and philosophical sciences also at institutions level and to overcome definitively old paradigms and presumptions.

Reductionism assigned to psychology the study and care of a mind without a body, and to medicine the study of a body without mind. The overcoming of this old paradigm and the achievement of a new integrated model in research, knowledge and care for human beings is possible thanks to neurosciences, epigenetics, psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunology and their relationships with physiology and pathology.

Hopefully by analyzing the limits of modern medicine and psychology in a constructive way, the conference will lay the basis for new paths of study and formation in spite of the current limited resources.

The difficulties ahead are many but the change has already begun. The approach to care is changing even if slowly. Examples of this change are shown by the positive effects on health produced by music therapy, meditation techniques, physical exercise, integrative treatments.

Lastly we would like to remember Karl Jasper, the great philosopher as well as medical doctor and psychiatrist, who highlighted the importance of a "deliberate distinction between medical healing and the salvation of the soul, between the doctor and the shepherd of souls". Although underlying the importance for medical, psychological and philosophical sciences to maintain their identity, we are strongly convinced that an open

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debate among different identities can only bring more richness to the care and study of human beings: a great opportunity.

EDITORIAL 2

The time of the “*unicum*” has arrived after centuries of reductionism .

Maria Grazia Gifone

Professor of General Pathology, Director of the Department of Clinical Medicine, Healthcare, Environment and Life Sciences at the University of L'Aquila

Mauro Bologna

Professor of General Pathology, Coordinator of the II Level Master in Psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunology, Dept. of Environment and Life Sciences at the University of L'Aquila

For centuries the western medical schools have adopted the reductionist perspective consisting in a clear separation between mind and body. As inevitable conclusion we are now finally achieving the objective conviction that considers the individual as a “*unicum*”, an indissoluble whole made of mind and body that constantly communicate with each other through the nervous, endocrine and immune systems.

In all species, the individual is made of many parts that are formed, develop and function in a biological environment characterized by communicating systems and by important influences among brain, survival reactions, immune system and control mechanism of organic self-regulating systems.

Under the viewpoint of medical and biological studies it is absurd to consider a living being in its isolated and separated single parts. It may be useful only at the beginning of a learning path to study separately the different parts and systems but these distinctions can no longer be maintained while advancing in the study of the medical sciences.

Yet this is what the Western reductionist models have imposed for a long time, ignoring if not refusing the equally centuries old teaching from the Asian medical schools which see the body in the interaction and integration of its single parts.

It is not easy to overcome this state of things and to propose a new vision in the medical academic world; a vision that considers the individual as a whole and is able to see the relationships between the fundamental systems of regulation. Yet this represents the only modern and truly scientific path to follow.

This new medical perspective lead to the encounter of enlightened scholars open to an intercultural debate between West and East (we refer to Francesco Bottaccioli from Italy) which resulted then in new and innovative didactic paths as well as integrated study courses as the Master in “Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology and Science of Integrative Care” at the University of L'Aquila, organized together with SIPNEI (Italian Society of Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology). Professionals from all the scientific branches studying the human beings, their body and brain, such as philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, biologists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, osteopaths, dentists, surgeons, take part to this open debate and contribute actively to the new model of integrated study and therapy.

For the Italian Schools of Medicine, this event represents an important milestone in the medical education.

We gladly and proudly participate to this upcoming meeting in Turin organized together by the University of Turin and SIPNEI.