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

Edited by Francesco Bottaccioli

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INTEGRATIVE CARE AND ITS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCES



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INTERVIEW

Page 4. Joanna Moncrieff: a radical criticism to psychiatry

A conversation with the combative British psychiatrist who criticizes the current model used in psychiatry. She is also author of international best sellers, such as “The bitterest pills”. In her books Joanna Moncrieff advocates the thesis that the explanation of the mental disease is based on the effects of medical drugs rather than on the pathogenesis of the disease. Antipsychotics are tranquillizers while antidepressants dampen emotions and thus also the feeling of depression. That is why, she says, they seem to cure.

Paola Emilia Cicerone

INTEGRATIVE CARES

Page 7. Nutrition, physical exercise and stress management for the treatment and prevention of Psychiatric Disorders. A Narrative Review Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology-Based. In the PNEI perspective many factors can influence mental health with the endocrine system being involved in mediating the effects of environmental health and inflammation in the onset and course of psychiatric disorders considered as a result of individual and collective conditions and behaviours.

Francesco Bottaccioli, Anna Giulia Bottaccioli, Enrica Marzola, Paola Longo, Andrea Minelli e Giovanni Abbate-Daga

Page 19. Hypnosis in cardiovascular procedures.

In an interventional cardiology department, micro-invasive maneuvers and instrumental examinations are fundamental activities, but they can lead to a certain amount of anxiety, fear and a considerable discomfort in a rather large number of patients. Clinical hypnosis proves to be particularly effective to keep under control a situation of pain and anxiety thus enabling a significant reduction in the pharmacological therapy based on narcotic/sedative drugs, reducing the

duration of the intervention as well as involving the patients in their path of care and to create a positive memory of the lived experience.

Danilo Sirigu, Gianfranco Delogu

EDITORIAL

Critical psychiatry and PNEI approach to mental health care.

Francesco Bottaccioli

Philosophy of Science, Neuro-cognitive Psychology, Master Director in “PNEI and Science of integrated care” at the University of L’Aquila

In a recent publication of ours, starting from the largely acknowledged crisis of psychiatry, we shift to examine the scientific evidence supporting the integration of treatments for psychological and psychiatric disorders. At page 7-18 of this issue, our readers will find the Italian translation of our paper.

In this text we write how biological psychiatry, based on an extensive use of psychotropic drugs, did not keep up its promises. Those promises have been broken against the controlled empirical research that documented an insufficient efficacy of the molecules proposed in the last fifty years facing significative adverse events on several physiological systems. Does the crisis of biological psychiatry mean perhaps that we can do without biology to try to understand, prevent and cure the disorders of psyche? Certainly not. The point is which kind of biology? Here the work of Joanna Moncrieff helps us to answer this question. In her books, papers as well as the interview kindly granted to us, the British psychiatrist explains the bluff behind the narration used by pharmacological psychiatry which claims that drugs cure abnormalities in the brain chemistry: serotonin deficiency in the case of depression, alterations of dopamine for psychosis. Actually, as Moncrieff documents, antipsychotics are essentially the modern version of the old tranquillizers and serotonergic antidepressants which dampen feelings and thus also the depressive feelings. They seem to cure, but as a matter of fact, when they work, they are just modifying some symptomatic manifestations.

Since 2007, when the British psychiatrist published her courageous and valuable “The Myth of the Chemical Cure”, to today (with her latest work, *The Bitterest Pills*), more and more evidence indicates that there is no an empirically confirmed paradigm behind psychopharmacology.

From this absolutely acceptable data, Moncrieff and her “Critical Psychiatry” team draw, alas, some “dèjà vu” consequences: 1) mental illness is one of the possible

ways in which people respond to the environment; 2) therefore it is not a disease because it is not caused by a biological factor such as a tumor or a pathogen; 3) conclusion: we do not need a medical approach but a social one, in this social approach Moncrieff includes also “psychological support”.

We do not share this opinion because: 1) if it were a way of being, it would not cause so much suffering and so much deficit in functioning to the person affected by a mental disorder; 2) PNEI teaches us that diseases are complex phenomena where emotions, stress, trauma become biology and this latter becomes altered emotions and cognition; 3) the approach to prevention and treatment must be integrated namely it must be able to identify the psychological and biological factors of unbalance of the subject and conceive a psychological and biomedical intervention. Meditation, body-mind practices, psychotherapy which is not support, but a therapy through a program of change which in order to be such, it must include also nutrition, physical activity, biological well-being, under the competent guidance of a PNEI-based medical doctor.

It is well-known that we fully agree with Moncrieff about mental disorders originating in this mercantile and individualistic society, although treating mental disorder as a social phenomenon would be the same as not treating a cancer since this largely stems from a polluted and socially ill society.

1. Francesco Bottaccioli, Anna G. Bottaccioli, Enrica Marzola, Paola Longo, Andrea Minelli, and Giovanni Abbate-Daga. 2021. “Nutrition, Exercise, and Stress Management for Treatment and Prevention of Psychiatric Disorders. A Narrative Review Psychoneuroendocrineimmunology-Based” *Endocrines* 2, no. 3: 226-240