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EDITORIAL

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Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the last issue of the year 2010.

The review article by Anne Maria Möller-Leimkühler presents a synthesis of possible reasons of the higher comorbidity of **cardiovascular disease (CVD) and depression in women** from a biopsychosocial perspective. The available literature has been extensively reviewed from a gender perspective and looks at the link between depression and CVD. The review article emphasises the importance of promoting women's health and should provide an impetus for further studies in order to understand the sex and gender differences within biological, psychosocial and sociostructural determinants and pathways.

Negative emotion exerts a considerable influence on cognitive processes. This may have clinical implications in mental illness, such as **schizophrenia**, where negative emotions often prevail. Ute Habel and German colleagues have conducted a brain imaging study with 14 schizophrenia patients and 14 healthy volunteers. The investigation centered on the neural correlates of emotion-cognition interactions. Emotion was induced by odorants during an n-back working memory task. The results show that similar detrimental effects of negative stimulation on working memory performance were observed in patients and control subjects. Among the neural correlates modulating this interaction a decreased activation emerged in patients in the anterior cingulate and the medial superior frontal cortex and increased activation in the medial orbitofrontal and middle frontal.

Clinical and electrophysiological studies suggest that **panic disorder (PD)** patients show disturbed response inhibition to sensory stimuli. Thus, habituation of neuronal activation after repeated sine tone stimulation was assessed by functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in patients with PD. For this study presented by Bettina Pfeleiderer and colleagues 20 patients with PD and 20 age and gender-matched healthy controls were assessed by 3T fMRI for auditory habituation. The results support the hypothesis of an aberrant processing of sensory information in PD patients. This phenomenon may underlie an enhanced responsiveness to anxiety-relevant or irrelevant stimuli possibly increasing PD vulnerability.

Identifying the genes and neurobiologic pathways relevant to **suicidal behavior** is important for preventative strategies. Yang Wang and Chinese colleagues conducted a case-control association analysis in search of the SCN8A gene polymorphism conferring genetic susceptibility to suicide in the Chinese population. A total of 626 subjects were recruited for this study, including 297 suicide attempters and 239 non-attempters from Shanghai. The findings suggest that the SCN8A gene may be involved in the susceptibility to suicidal behavior among psychiatric disorder patients in the Han Chinese population.

Nahit Motavalli Mukaddes and colleagues from Turkey present an original investigation into the rate and type of psychiatric co-morbidity in individuals with diagnosis of **high functioning autism (HFA) and Asperger's disorder (AS)**. The study included 30 children and adolescents with

diagnosis of HFA and 30 subjects with AS. Psychiatric comorbidity was assessed by using the Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School Age Children-Present and Lifetime Version (K-SADS-PL-T). The rate of comorbid psychiatric disorders was very high in both groups (93.3% in HFA and 100% in AS). The most common comorbid disorder in both groups was attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). From a clinical perspective, it could be concluded that both disorders involve a high risk for developing psychiatric disorders. From a nosological perspective, the substantial similarities in terms of psychiatric comorbidity may support the idea that both disorders are on the same spectrum and differ in some aspects.

Disturbed ion homeostasis and apoptosis have been implicated in the pathophysiology of **bipolar disorder (BD)**. In the study presented by Yonglin Gao and US colleagues, monensin, a sodium ionophore, was used to model the increase $[Na^+]_{in}$ and $[Ca^{2+}]_{in}$ seen in BD patients. The findings suggest that the elevation of $[Na^+]_{in}$ and $[Ca^{2+}]_{in}$ induced ONP apoptosis and altered the expression of TRPM2. Lithium pre-treatment attenuated the apoptosis induced by ionic stress.

Molecular genetic studies have identified several candidate genes related to **Major depressive disorder (MDD)**. Dystrobrevin binding protein 1 (Dysbindin; DTNBP1) is widely expressed at significant levels within cerebral cortex and hippocampus and binds to both alpha and beta dystrobrevins. Neslihan Aygun Kocabas and colleagues investigated the functional impact of genotypes on susceptibility for depression and some clinical phenotypes. Two intronic SNPs of DTNBP1 were analysed in 206 patients with MDD. The authors provide evidence that these two SNPs in DTNBP1 gene are not related to clinical phenotypes such as melancholia, age at onset, suicidality and co-morbid anxiety disorders, as well as to treatment response phenotypes.

Michele Fornaro and colleagues studied the prevalence of **major depressive disorder (MDD)** and other selected axis-I disorders among women with newly diagnosed, untreated endocrine disorders. 218 consecutive women, ages 18 to 65, with newly diagnosed, untreated endocrine disorders were referred for potential diagnosis of co-morbid axis-I disorders with the use of the Structured Clinical Interview for Axis I-Patient Edition (SCID-P). The findings are consistent with previous studies and suggest an increased prevalence of MDD and other axis-I disorders among women with newly diagnosed endocrine disorders, providing further evidence suggesting that women with endocrine abnormalities may be at increased risk of depression and/or anxiety disorders.

Letters to the Editors have been sent by Jagadisha Thirthalli and Indian colleagues as well as by Yi Yang and colleagues. These letters discuss recently published articles in the World Journal of Biological Psychiatry and stimulate further debate.

Yours sincerely,

Siegfried Kasper, MD
Chief Editor