

E006 - Sex specific permanent effect of early postnatal genistein administration on nitrergic and vasopressinergic systems

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which may interfere with endocrine system and, during developmental critical periods, lead to permanent alterations of estrogen sensitive hypothalamic circuits (Frank et al., *Front. Neuroendocrinol.*, 35: 550–557, 2014). GEN exposure through mothers resulted in an anxiolytic effect and a concurrent decrease of neural NO synthase (nNOS)+ cells in amygdala of male offspring (Rodriguez-Gomez, et al., *Physiol. Behav.*, 133:

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107–14, 2014), consistently with the role of nNOS system in anxiety regulation and its sensitivity to gonadal hormones (Panzica et al., *Neuroscience*, 138: 987-995, 2006).

We analyzed anxiety levels and related neuronal circuits in mice directly fed with either vehicle, Estradiol (E2) or GEN from birth (P0) to P8. Behavioral tests were conducted at P60. Coronal serial sections were collected from P90 mice and processed for immunohistochemistry against nNOS and vasopressin (AVP).

The GEN treatment had a dichotomic effect on sexes: anxiolitic on females while anxiogenic on males. Concurrently nNOS and AVP+ cell density in many hypothalamic nuclei was affected. Interestingly only few of those effects were mimicked by E2 treatment suggesting that GEN may act trough different intracellular pathways.

These results raise concerns about the possible long-term effects of the widespread use of soy-based food and especially of prewaening supplements in livestock, as pigs which are frequently affected by hypo-fertility problems. Similar concerns could involve the use of soy-based formulas for babies.

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