Special Issue

Stress and Trauma Revisited: Oxytocin, Sociostasis, and Hormesis—Missing Pieces of an Evolving Puzzle

Message from the Guest Editors

The concept of sociostasis will be introduced here, examining the hypothesis that two neuropeptides, oxytocin and vasopressin, have major roles in explaining how sociality protects, heals, and restores across the human lifespan. Sociostasis suggests a neuroendocrine basis for mechanisms through which social behavior, social attachments, and social bonds support health and wellbeing in humans and other mammals. Sociostasis has been posited to supplement older terms such as homeostasis or allostasis, which often do not incorporate the importance of social interactions in the regulation of responses to stress.

We also will examine the role of the vasopressin–oxytocin system in "stress-response hormesis." Hormesis is a biphasic biological process characterized by beneficial consequences following a challenge. There is evidence implicating oxytocin in the benefits of hormetic experiences, including birth, exercise, and even psychedelics. Understanding the role of the vasopressin–oxytocin system in sociostasis and hormesis has potential applications in understanding, preventing, and treating chronic diseases and extending longevity.

Guest Editors

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