

In This Issue

In this issue of the *Journal of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease*, we have the honor of presenting a themed issue of the David Barker commemorative meeting, together with four original papers and an inspiring book review. The themed issue publications result from a symposium held at the University of Southampton celebrating the life and work of Professor David Barker, the founding father of DOHaD. Together, Caroline Fall and Cyrus Cooper have coordinated the publication of 10 manuscripts resulting from the meeting. In the attached introduction by Drs Fall and Cooper, they describe each of these papers, and note that a recording of all the presentations at the meeting is available. Complementing the themed issue are four original articles and a book review.

Original Articles

When are sex-specific effects really sex specific? In this brief report, Chin *et al.* examined developmental programming studies that report sex-specific effects and questioned whether the authors appropriately tested whether the effect of treatment differed between the sexes. The authors report that only one-third of studies reporting sex differences actually included a sex by treatment interaction term in their statistical models. If the effect is significant in only one sex, alternative solutions may include presenting confidence intervals or using Bayesian approaches.

Generational reproductive outcomes in Wistar rats maternally exposed to *Ricinus communis* oil at different stages of gestation. Salami and Rashi exposed pregnant rats to *Ricinus communis* oil (RCO) throughout gestation, demonstrating that maternal exposure at early gestation periods impaired androgen-mediated reproductive endpoints, including anogenital distance among male pups. As RCO, a commonly used

laxative, has estrogenic potential, these results suggest caution in its use during pregnancy.

Characterization of early changes in fetoplacental hemodynamics in a diet-induced rabbit model of IUGR. Lopez-Tello *et al.* utilized a model of maternal underfeeding to produce intrauterine growth-restricted (IUGR) newborn rabbits. The authors demonstrated that feed restriction altered fetal placental blood flow associated with higher systolic peak flows. Together with evidence of fetal brain-sparing effects, these results support the use of undernourished rabbits as a model for IUGR studies.

Prenatal stress produces sex-specific changes in depression-like behavior in rats: implications for increased vulnerability in females. Sickmann *et al.* examined if prenatal stress alters offspring anxiety and depression-like behavior in male and female offspring. Male prenatal stress-exposed offspring displayed changes in locomotive activity, whereas female offspring demonstrated an increased depressive-like behavior. These findings contribute importantly to the literature indicating that the prenatal stress may have significant offspring behavioral effects.

Book Review

Susan L. Prescott, *Origins: Early-Life Solutions to the Modern Health Crisis*. C.E. Finch provides a superb review of Dr Prescott's book, which summarizes DOHaD research in relation to diet, lifestyle and environmental influences. Dr Finch's in-depth, laudatory review encourages the reading of this excellent work.

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