An integrated approach based on psychoeducational, lifestyle and nutritional interventions for the treatment of metabolic and general health disturbances in patients with psychiatric disorders

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Patients with psychiatric disorders, in particular with schizophrenia (SCZ) and bipolar disorder (BD), have higher morbidity and mortality than general population. Organic diseases strongly affect the duration of patients’ lives; psychiatric patients, in fact, frequently show increased weight gain and metabolic disturbances that contribute to the development of serious medical conditions. Increased weight gain and metabolic disturbances in psychiatric patients are often determined by specific medications (especially mood stabilizers and atypical antipsychotics) and may induce a whole body inflammatory state that worsens the neuropsychiatric manifestations. The “Mediterranean diet” is a nutritional recommendation inspired by the traditional dietary patterns of Mediterranean countries including high consumption of olive oil, legumes, unrefined cereals, fruits, vegetables and fish. Mediterranean diet and healthy lifestyle habits have been shown to represent an effective intervention to treat obesity and metabolic disturbances as well as certain neuropsychiatric conditions. In addition, specific nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, s-adenosylmethionine and l-acetylcarnitine have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and neurotrophic properties potentially relevant to improve both physical and mental disturbances of psychiatric patients. Given the above, in the present ongoing study SCZ and BD patients referring to the Psychiatric Day Hospital of Policlinico Umberto I Hospital underwent an integrated protocol involving 1) nutritional interventions based on Mediterranean diet recommendations; 2) administration of omega-3, s-adenosylmethionine and l-acetylcarnitine supplements; 3) implementation of psychoeducational sessions focused on healthy lifestyles habits. The objective of the study was to obtain significant improvements in patients’ metabolic disturbances, lifestyle habits, psychiatric symptoms, perceived general health and adherence to pharmacological treatment.

Biography
Francesco Saverio Bersani is a resident physician at the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry of Sapienza University of Rome and visiting fellow at University of Hertfordshire and University of California San Francisco. Major areas of interest include biological psychiatry, psychopharmacology, brain modulation techniques, substance misuse and psychoneuroendocrinology.

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