



First Meeting of the Italian Stress Network

## STRESS, BRAIN AND BEHAVIOR: ADVANCES IN TRANSLATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE

Rome - 12,13 February 2026

Sapienza University of Rome - Department of Physiology and Pharmacology "V. Erspamer"

Room A Pharmacology Building CU024

### Program

**February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

12:30 - 13:45 **Registration**

13:45 - 14:00 **Opening and Welcome Remarks**

14:00 - 15:30 **Session 1 - Stress Drives Aging**

Chair: Alessandro Bartolomucci and Luca Carnevali (University of Parma, Italy)

• Fabrizio d'Adda di Fagagna (Istituto Fondazione di Oncologia Molecolare, Milan, Italy)  
*A Primers of Hallmarks of Aging for Stress Biology*

• Alessandro Bartolomucci (University of Parma, Italy; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA)  
*Mechanisms of Stress-induced Acceleration of Aging*

• Alessandra Berry (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy)  
*Early Life Stress, Nutrition and Aging*

• Margherita Barbetti (University of Parma, Italy)  
*Stress Drives Aging Associated Cardiovascular Diseases*

15:30 - 16:15 **Round Table - From Lab to Life: How Stress Shapes Society and Health**

Moderators: Marco A. Riva and Patrizia Campolongo

Participants:

- Filippo Caraci (University of Catania, Italy)
- Raül Andero Galí (ICREA, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)
- Simone Macrì (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy)
- Miriam Melis (University of Cagliari, Italy)
- Caterina Scuderi (Sapienza University of Rome, Italy)



16:15 -16:45 **Coffee Break**

16:45 - 17:45 **Data Blitz Presentations**

17:45 - 18:45 **Keynote Lecture:** Carmen Sandi

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, EPFL, Switzerland

*Navigating a Stressful World: Insights into Individual Differences and Underlying Mechanisms*

19:45 - 00:00 **Tiber Cruise & Social Dinner**





**February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

9:00 - 10:30

**Session 2 - *Pharmacological Modulation of Stress Response***

Chair: Simona Scheggi (University of Siena, Italy)

- Marco Bortolato (University of Florida, Gainesville, USA)

*Neurosteroids as Novel Therapeutic Agents for Depression: Role of the Enzyme 5-alpha Reductase 2 in Sex-dimorphic Responses to Stress*

- Danilo De Gregorio (IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital, Milan, Italy)

*The Additive Effect of Ketamine to the Electroconvulsive Stimulation in a Model of Chronic Social Defeat Stress*

- Vittoria Borgonetti (University of Siena, Italy; The Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, USA)

*Targeting IL-18 Signaling in the Central Amygdala in a Rat Model of Comorbid PTSD and Alcohol Use Disorder*

- Federico Bandalise (University of Cagliari, Italy)

*Stress on the Powerhouse: Sex-specific Subcellular Mechanisms Compromise VTA Circuits Upon Prenatal Cannabis Exposure*

10:30 - 11:00

**Coffee Break**

11:00 - 12:30

**Session 3 - *Trauma, Resilience and Psychiatric Vulnerability***

Chair: Gian Marco Leggio (University of Catania, Italy)

- Laura Musazzi (University of Milano Bicocca, Italy)

*Hippocampal Multiomic Signature of Stress Vulnerability and Ketamine Antidepressant Response in the Rat Chronic Mild Stress Model*

- Gian Marco Leggio (University of Catania, Italy)

*Functional and Structural Adaptations Underlying Sex-biased Traumatic Stress Susceptibility and Resilience*

- Giulia Federica Mancini (Sapienza University of Rome, Italy)

*From Trauma to PTSD: Dissecting Vulnerability and Resilience in a Rat Model*

- Anna Monai (Italian Institute of Technology, Genova, Italy)

*Negative Events Influence Behavior through Prefrontal Cortex CRF Mechanisms*

12:30 - 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 - 15:00	<b>Poster Presentation</b>
15:00 - 16:30	<b>Session 4 - Psychopathological Implications of Stress During Development</b> Chair: Francesca Cirulli (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Juliet Richetto (University of Zurich-Vetsuisse, Zurich, Switzerland) <i>Preconception Social Stress: From Placental Adaptations to Lifelong Behavioral Outcomes</i></li><li>• Annamaria Cattaneo (University of Milan, Italy) <i>From Mother to Child: Biological Mechanisms Linking Depression in Pregnancy to Offspring Outcomes</i></li><li>• Chiara Musillo (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy) <i>Stress and Nutrition During Pregnancy Share Common Mechanisms and Have Sex-specific Effects on Brain Development</i></li><li>• Livio Provenzi (University of Pavia, Italy) <i>Exploring Mechanisms of Brain-to-brain Attunement Across Socio-emotional Stress Regulation: EEG Hyperscanning in the Parent-infant Dyad</i></li></ul>
16:30 - 17:00	<b>Awards &amp; Closing Ceremony</b>

