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Early Life Development and Health: Impact on Later Life—Introduction

This Supplement represents the fifth *Annals* of the Collège International de Recherche Servier (CIRS) and arises out of a 4-day symposium on "Early Brain Development and Health" organized by CIRS in September 2007. The proceedings of the previous four *Annals* on *Stress, Aging, Depression, and Sleep* have been published as Supplements of *Metabolism*.

The CIRS has the exciting challenge of creating a "façon de faire" of itself and working with leaders of opinion in different countries and medical fields to develop updated analytical reviews of clinical and research advances in areas of medical importance. As in the past, the main themes of these *Annals* are selected to address topical health and scientific issues that face the practicing physician.

The theme of the fifth *Annals* is *Early Life Development and Health: Impact on Later Life.* This title reflects the fact that many serious disorders of modern life are determined by gene-environment interactions that begin during development and continue throughout the life span.

The contributions published in these *Annals* are particularly valuable because they are based on the expertise of experienced medical scientists, all of whom are members of the CIRS's Scientific Advisory Committee. The importance of the topics covered is increasingly recognized by physicians and public health experts. Such topics include fundamental anatomical and physiological features of early life development, gene-environment interactions across the life span, epigenetic factors such as DNA methylation and histone modification, chemical mediators and modulators, and the social environment. In addition, the windows of vulnerability for many aspects of brain and body development and their long-term effects are discussed. Other important topics include the epidemiology of adverse childhood experiences and lifelong consequences as well as several specific disorders, such as cardiovascular disease, Parkinson disease, and autism, each of which has been linked with abnormal early development.

As President of CIRS, it is my pleasure to acknowledge and warmly thank all the authors and editors for their excellent contributions to these published proceedings.

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