

IN BRIEF

CANCER

Congenital IGF-I deficiency tends to confer protection against post-natal development of malignancies

Steuerman, R. *et al.* *Eur. J. Endocrinol.* doi:10.1530/EJE-10-0859

Compared with family members, homozygous patients with congenital insulin-like growth hormone 1 (IGF-1) deficiency and insensitivity to growth hormone (GH) seem to be protected from the development of malignancies later in life, even if the patients were treated with IGF-1. Of 230 patients with Laron syndrome, none developed cancer, compared with 30 cases of cancer observed in first-degree relatives. Patients with congenital isolated GH deficiency were also protected.

PITUITARY GLAND

Pituitary stalk interruption syndrome in 83 patients: novel *HESX1* mutation and severe hormonal prognosis in malformative forms

Reynaud, R. *et al.* *Eur. J. Endocrinol.* doi:10.1530/EJE-10-0892

Reynaud and colleagues screened 83 patients with pituitary stalk interruption syndrome (PSIS) from 80 pedigrees for mutations in *HESX1*, *LHX4*, *OTX2* and *SOX3* genes. PSIS was found predominantly in men and was rarely familial (5%). Individuals with extrapituitary malformations—the only group to show pituitary hypoplasia—exhibited multiple hormone deficits more often than did those without (87.5% versus 69.5%).

OBESITY

Hemojuvelin: a new link between obesity and iron homeostasis

Luciani, N. *et al.* *Obesity* doi:10.1038/oby.2011.12

Expression of mRNA of the iron-regulatory protein hemojuvelin is highly increased in adipose tissue of patients with morbid obesity. In liver cells, hemojuvelin acts as a coreceptor of bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) to enhance hepcidin expression. Luciani *et al.* postulate that the same may hold true for adipose tissue, as cultured adipocytes increased their hepcidin expression when challenged with BMP2.

REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY

Gpr54^{-/-} mice show more pronounced defects in spermatogenesis than Kiss1^{-/-} mice and improved spermatogenesis with age when exposed to dietary phytoestrogens

Mei, H. *et al.* *Reproduction* 141, 357–366 (2011)

Studies of mutant mice with defects in the reproductive axis should take into account a possible effect of dietary phytoestrogens. Mei and colleagues from the University of Cambridge discovered that mice that lack the kisspeptin receptor Gpr54 show no age-related increase in testes weight or improved spermatogenesis when fed a phytoestrogen-free diet.