

Developmental programming of the female neuroendocrine system by steroids

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© 2018 British Society for Neuroendocrinology Developmental programming refers to processes that occur during early life that may have long-term consequences, modulating adult health and disease. Complex diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, have a high prevalence in different populations, are multifactorial, and may have a strong environmental component. The environment interacts with organisms, affecting their behaviour, morphology and physiology. This interaction may induce permanent or long-term changes, and organisms may be more susceptible to environmental factors during certain developmental stages, such as the prenatal and early postnatal periods. Several factors have been identified as responsible for inducing the reprogramming of various reproductive and nonreproductive tissues. Among them, both natural and synthetic steroids, such as endocrine disruptors, are known to have either detrimental or positive effects on organisms depending on the dose of e