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The role of BDNF in depression

Will the neurotrophin hypothesis sparkle on, long after the glitter of the fireworks is gone?

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Over the past years the neurotrophin hypothesis has gained steam in explaining the signs and symptoms of depressive disorders as a function of low neurotrophic support. Amid the excitement generated by this hypothesis, there is also controversy. The prevailing thesis is a pursuit on a better appreciation and a more refined model of (peripheral) neurotrophic functioning in depressive (and related) disorders. I find that sufficiently powered (Big Data Notable Fidelity) and well-controlled studies do not bring what was hoped for. Alongside findings that are contradictory to what was expected, it appears that a part of the optimism in the literature is due to underpowered studies and overestimations of effect-sizes. So I conclude that the evidence for the neurotrophin hypothesis, at the human level and being contingent upon peripheral measures, is not as strong as initially thought.

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