ABSTRACT: A Harvard study on the effect of anti-allergic drugs on obesity and diabetes; Swine flu, obese people and children among the categories most at risk; according to a Euroaspire survey, obesity and hypertension may worsen after an infarction.

Anti-allergic drugs against obesity and diabetes

Drugs similar to the ones presently used to cure allergies may be useful to fight obesity and prevent type-2 diabetes. These were the conclusions of a study carried out by researchers from the Harvard University in Boston, USA, published in Nature Medicine magazine (July 2009). The researchers have studied the wound healing process to understand how inflammation, which has its role in asthma and other allergies, may play a role in diabetes too. The study was performed on experimental animals, that were administered two common antihistaminic drugs. The mice used in the study were obese and diabetic. They were divided into four groups: the first one, used as control group, did not receive any particular treatment; the second group received only a healthy diet; the third group received a "normal" diet and an antihistaminic drug and the fourth group received a healthy diet and an antihistaminic drug.

The data obtained showed a slight improvement in the second group, a clear improvement in body weight and diabetes in the third group and a definite improvement in the fourth group, that reached almost 100% in all respects. The mice in the fourth group even maintained the results achieved after three months of a diet that included fats and carbohydrates.

Swine flu: obese people and children among the categories most at risk

Chronic patients, diabetics, obese people, pregnant women: swine flu might be more aggressive for them; this is why they will be the first to be vaccinated against the H1N1 virus in Europe. But there is another and equally important group at risk: that of children under two (according to certain experts the group should include children up to six years of age), that are considered particularly vulnerable. In fact, due to their immature immune system, small children are exposed to all sorts of viruses; in addition, their local defence is not yet completely developed. Two precautions are recommended: to prolong breast-feeding as much as possible and to take the utmost caution with kindergartens, also because the vaccine may not be ready until December. It is recommended to those who are going to travel this Summer that they bring their Team card (European Health Insurance Card) along. Above all, before travelling abroad a visit from the family practitioner or paediatrician is recommended - a physician will help consider the possible health hazards.

Obesity and hypertension increase after an infarction

According to a survey performed by the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Euroaspire, cardiovascular prevention is still underestimated even after a major alert signal such as an
infarction. The survey has analysed (for the first time in 1995 and later in 2007) the risk factors in these patients: hypertensive patients increased from 58% to 61%, overweight patients from 77% to 83%, obese patients from 25% to 38%. The only slight improvement relates to smokers, who decreased from 20% to 18%.