Abstract of presentation

Aggression is a natural behaviour, whereas violence is not. The biomedical approach assumed for a long time that the mechanisms of aggression and violence are essentially similar. However, recent work with abnormal aggression models refuted this assumption. Work with such models not only showed that the mechanisms of aggression and violence differ, but also that behaviourally different abnormal aggressions have different neuroendocrinologic underpinnings. I will overview the concept of abnormal aggression, and summarize the mechanistic discoveries related to this approach. The human relevance of these findings will also be addressed.

Biographical note

Jozsef Haller worked as a research scientist at the Institute of Experimental Medicine (Budapest, Hungary) from 1991 to 2020. He occupied various positions, being laboratory head from 1999 and department head from 2004. He worked as a visiting scientist at the Leiden University (The Netherlands) between 1997 and 1999. He worked as a visiting scientist for shorter periods in France, The Netherlands (Groeningen University), UK, and USA. He is the head of the Criminal Psychology Department of the University of Public Service since 2016. He became the head of the Doctoral School of this university in 2021.

Haller obtained his University Doctor and PhD degrees in 1991 and 1995, respectively, at the Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest). In 2004, he obtained the Doctor in Science degree at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the habilitated doctor degree in 2018 at the University of Public Service.

As a scientist, Haller studied the neurobiology of behavior with a special focus on stress, aggression and the endocannabinoid system. He developed the concept of abnormal aggression and contributed substantially to the development of new concepts related to the neuroendocrine control of violence. He also had important contributions to the understanding of the role of the endocannabinoid system in anxiety and stimulus responding.