

ITALY

Maria Abbracchio

Pharmacology

Maria Abbracchio serves currently as Deputy Rector and as Vice Rector for Research and Innovation at the University of Milan, and she is author of more than 200 scientific papers.

She researches the biochemical effects of drugs at cellular level. Her work has shown that G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) play a role in controlling cell behaviour. Combining research work from several different scientific disciplines, scientists in this field are looking at neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, and even heart attacks and strokes to see how different drugs interact with GPCRs. One receptor initially identified in Abbracchio's research, called GPR17, has been shown to react with certain drugs and reduce brain inflammation, as well as improve memory and learning abilities.

She was nominated Highly Cited Scientist by Thompson & Reuters in 2009 (which identifies the most influential researchers of the world, less than 0.5% of all publishing scientists) and has received the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for her scientific achievements.

She was nominated by the Italian Minister of Education and Research as the Chairperson of the Study Group on Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Technologies for the National Program for Research and Innovation 2021-2027.