

Histology & Embryology Periodical

Department of Histology and Embryology Third Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague

Volume 2, Issue 5

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What´s up...

A busy month ahead; Course 5: **"Development of cells and tissues"**

Lecture: Thalidomide

When you listen to the lecture, consider it not merely a lesson on a history of one of medicinal drugs. The thalidomide case was the first and the most obvious example of adverse effects of the drugs and chemicals thrown to the market after the WWII. Some call it a "chemical revolution" giving the number of new synthetic chemicals that have been introduced into commerce. The story of thalidomide was like a bombshell in the excitement of the postwar years. All involved were shocked; medical professionals, scientists and public alike. In medicine, the thalidomide case shattered the myth of the placental barrier; that is a belief that the placenta acts as an impenetrable shield that protects developing organism from any harm. In science, the case enforced the principle "timing is everything", not necessarily the dose. Limb development has a critical period between the fifth and eighth week of pregnancy. If a thalidomide pill was swallowed within the critical time a baby was born with various damage on his/her limbs. If on the other hand, pills were used prior to or after the critical period, baby was normally healthy. The thalidomide case also brought different standards for testing of new chemicals... as you will hear at the lecture.

Tue, March 31, 2015 at 11,30 am in the Syllaba lecture hall.

Lecture: **Basic morphogenetic processes** Don't miss for sure! **Wed, April 1**, 2015 at **11,30 am** in the Syllaba lecture hall

Week 7

Lectures:

Signaling during development Blastogenesis, Implantation, Placenta Notogenesis, Neurulation Embryonal development

Week 8

Lectures: Histogenesis Developmental toxicity & Pharmacotherapy during pregnancy Aging of organisms

Seminar: Early development, chick embryo

The chick embryo as the premier research model organism – here we are with the early development demonstration

Week 9

Seminar: **Embryology** – you, personally or in a team, will work on a topic from embryology and present it to your classmates! Seminar: **Clinical detective story 6** – an evaluation of the fetal risks after intrauterine exposition to various agents.

Reminders

Your workbook is your proof of your activity during practicals. The elementary sense of using your workbooks is using them during the classes, not completing them at the end of semester.

During the practicals in both remaining courses of the summer semester; "Development" and "Tissues", your teachers and assistants will ensure that your **workbooks are updated**.



First-ever World Birth Defect Day

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) introduced **March 3** as World Birth Defect Day (WBDD). Every year on March 3 the public attention should be turned towards the facts that birth defects (BD) are:

- Common about 6% newborns worldwide annually, (about 7.9 million) are born with a serious BD (This number corresponds to the number of defects diagnosed at the end of 1 year of life. It includes such inborn defects which cannot be diagnosed just after the birth – glandular hypospadias, some heart defects, hip dysplasia. On the other hand, inborn developmental defects, diagnosed at birth, like cleft lip and/or palate, severe cyanotic heart defects, polydactyly etc. occur in 2,5-3 % newborns).
- Critical one in every five infant deaths is caused by a birth defect
- often **Curable** the WBDD should increase awareness of available treatment services
- **Preventable**: e.g. neural tube birth defects are preventable by daily intake of 400mg of folic acid yet birth defects such as spina bifida or anencephaly occur in 1 of 1000 birth. And some BD are totally preventable, for example the fetal alcoholic syndrome however, prenatal alcohol exposure still affects 1 in 100 Americans.

The CDC collaborates with 11 other organizations to implement the WBDD, among others Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), European Network of Teratology Information Services (ENTIS), and Teratology Society (TS).

For more information go to;

https://www.mothertobaby.org/experts-spreadmessage-about-preventable-birth-defects-onfirst-ever-world-birth-defects-dayp157523#157523

Epigenetic inheritance & ancestral exposure

Environmental factors such as toxins or nutrition have been shown to promote the epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of adult onset disease and phenotypic variation.

As is often the case in science, it take a brilliant failure to make a groundbreaking discovery. In 2005, biologist Michael Skinner at Washington State University led a team trying to test a hypothesis that a fungicide vinclozolin has the ability to disrupt the development of reproductive organs. The research was not going well and in the midst of all that Skinner's colleague came to tell him that by mistake she bred an unplanned 4th generation of the exposed rats, i.e. their great-grandchildren1. To their big surprise, the researchers identified low sperm count and a host of adult-onset diseases of organs such as prostate or kidney, testis abnormalities, odd immune responses, tumor development and a number of blood abnormalities such as hypercholesterolemia not only in the exposed animals (O generation) but also in the first, second and third generation.² What is it? How biological information are transmitted from one generation to the next besides written in genes?

"Epigenetics refers to long-term modification of gene activity that can be inherited, either somatically or transgenerationally, but that are independent of

¹ Interlandi, J. *The toxins that affected your great-grandparents could be in your genes.* Smithsonian magazine, December 2013.

² Skinner, M., K., Anway, M., D. *Endocrine disruptor vinclozolin induced epigenetic transgenerational adult-onset disease*. Critical review of Oncogenesis, 2007. **13** (1), pp. 75-82.

alterations in the primary base sequence of the organism's DNA³

The classic example of transgenerational effect of prenatal exposure is represented by the data from a "natural" experiment of Dutch Hunger Winter in 1944-45. Offspring from mothers exposed to under-<u>nutrition</u> during gestation, and even their grandchildren, have been shown increased rates of cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes and breast cancer, and offspring of prenatally exposed fathers may lead to increased chronic disease rate in adulthood⁴. There is a growing body of evidence from animals and humans suggesting that dietary factors *in utero* such as protein, ethanol, vitamin E or folate intake can have effects on subsequent generations.⁵

Epigenetic effects include primarily three different interacting mechanisms: 1) methylated groups attached to DNA described by Dr. Skinner like "burrs stuck to a knit sweater"¹; 2) histone modification;

and 3) non-coding micro RNAs which are responsible for gene expression during development and throughout life. ⁶



Fig1. A simplified drawing of DNA, histones and methylated groups.⁷

³ Brown, C., J., Rupert, J., L. *Hypoxia and environmental epigenetics*. High Altitude Medicine & Biology, 2014. **15**(3), pp. 323-330.

⁴Veenendaal MV et al. *Transgenerational effects of prenatal exposure to the 1944-45 Dutch famine*. BJOG, 2013. **120**(5), pp. 548-53.

⁵ McKay, J., A., Mathers, J., C. *Diet induced epigenetic changes and their implications for health.* Acta Physiolocia, 2011. **202**(2), pp.103-18.

⁶ Harris, M. Reviewer's commentary on Veenendaal M.,V. et al. *Transgenerational effects of prenatal exposure to the 1944-45 Dutch famine*. BJOG, 2013. **120**(5), pp. 548-53. "Unlike the information encoded in the DNA sequence, which is invariant between most cell types and over time, epigenetic information is **tissue specific** and can change in response to exogenous and endogenous perturbations." ³

Besides nutrition, embryo/fetal exposure to environmental factors, too promotes the epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of adult onset disease and phenotypic variations. For example, a DDT exposure in ancestors during a critical window of germline (sperms and oocytes) development can promote the transgenerational inheritance of obesity and a number of associated complex disease traits8, fungicide vinclozolin has been shown to cause transgenerational altered stress response9, the effect of exposure to phthalates on asthma was recently linked to DNA methylation¹⁰, a response to stress is suspect of epigenetic inheritance ⁸, and the examples are many, many more. All in all, epigenetics is a hot field these days.

But, epigenetics was not born yesterday either. Aristoteles believed that the environment sculpted the phenotype of individuals and that these effects were represented in their descendants, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) laid out his views on inheritance of acquired characteristics known as "soft inheritance", Conrad Waddington, the prominent 20th century

⁸ Skinner, M., K. et al. *Ancestral Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane* (DDT) exposure promotes epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of obesity. BMC Medicine, 2013. **11**:228.

⁹ Crews, D. et al. *Epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of altered stress responses*. PNAS, 2012. **109** (23), pp. 9143-9148.

⁷ Kloc, J. An Illustrated guide to epigenetics. Mother Jones [online]. Last updated Feb 8, 2011. [Cited 03.24. 2015]. Available at:

http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2011/02/illustrated-guide-epigenetics

¹⁰ Wang, I-J. et al. *Effects of phthalate exposure on asthma may be mediated through alterations in DNA methylation*. Clinical Epigenetics, 2015. 7:27.

developmental biologist, coined the term epigenetics in his classic paper "The epigenotype" in 1942, **Riggs and Holliday** and **Pugh** in 1975 proposed that DNA can be methylated in bacteria....¹¹

"Epigenetics plays a prominent role in understanding acclimation, adaptation, and evolution... it is an exciting yet still somewhat enigmatic and highly immature, field of biology"¹¹

Comparative biologists David Crews and Warren Burggren ¹¹ observe the use of the word "epigenetics" in several meanings. The predominant use is in medicine and refers to the literal meaning of epigenetics – "above genetics", and focuses on epigenetics as a pathological process, e.g. "epigenetics of cancer". On the other hand, life science circles view epigenetic phenomena as an adaptive mechanism, with ecological and evolutionary implication. A third, and more holistic view, sees epigenetics as a "perspective". And that is probably the way how to approach the greatly expanding field of epigenetic; as a new layer in a complexity of inheritance and individual phenotype.



¹¹ Burggren, W., W., Crews, D. *Epigenetics in Comparative Biology: Why we should pay attention*. Interactive and Comparative Biology, 2014. **54** (1), pp. 7-20.

Messenger RNA & horizontal gene transfer

In a research article published in Genome Biology in March 2015, the scientists from the University of Cambridge used genes corresponding to certain type of mRNA – transcriptomes – of humans and other primates, flies and nematode worms to identify a gene transfer from one species to another.

Horizontal transgenics is well-known in single cell organisms such as bacteria, however its existence in high organisms is much less established, and is controversial in humans (based on our anthropocentric tradition many still tend to think that humans are a unique branch on the tree of life).

The results of this study suggest that humans have at least 145 genes picked up from other species by their forebears (e.g. genes for synthesis of the "cellular glue" – hyaluronic acid from fungi, or obesity associated gene from marine algae), and provide at least 33 new examples of horizontally acquired genes. The researchers conclude that although horizontal gene transfer is generally lower in eukaryotes that in prokaryotes, it's far from rare, and that it has contributed and continues to contribute, to the evolution of many, perhaps all, animals.

The research article is accessible online at: http://genomebiology.com/2015/16/1/50

Endocrine disruptors III

Theo Colborn (1927-2014)



For the past two or three decades, scientists around the world have been contributing to the growing body of research on endocrine disruptors. The scientist who sparked the research as well as public and governmental attention is the "founding

mother" of endocrine disruptors, Theo Colborn.

World Wildlife and The Conservation Foundation. This was a ground-breaking moment because the findings in the report "Great Lakes, Great Legacy?" turned out to become a kickoff for the whole new field soon after named "endocrine disruption". The paper described an underlying problem in the seemingly cleaned Lakes; persistent, bioactive, toxic substances pollute the Great Lakes, accumulate in sediment and make their **way up the food chain**, causing adverse impact on metabolism and development. The most troubling aspect was the fact that "in most cases, the adult animals show **no visible sign of ill health**, **except abnormal behavior**."¹²

Theo Colborn was the first to realize that something

In her early life she was a pharmacist, she and her husband ran drugstores first in New Jersey, and then in Carbondale, Colorado where thev moved along with their four children. In her life а scientist. as she completed a Master's degree in Science - her specialty was freshwater ecology, then she pursued a course of study towards a Ph.D. She was awarded the title with minors in epidemiology, toxicology, and water chemistry in 1985, at age 58.

Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.

Concerning acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans; that the moment one definitely commits oneself then Providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamt would come his way.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.

Begin it now.

- J. W. Goethe – (Theo Colborn's favorite quote which she kept taped to the wall at TEDX) was disturbingly wrong in and around the Lakes, something other than the obvious outcomes of the heavily polluted then waters, on humans and wildlife alike, such as cancer or allergies. At that time, late 1980s, the words "toxic chemical" have become almost synonymous with cancer "not only in the public mind but in the minds of scientists and regulators as well."13 When she put the many papers she collected for the study and her wits together she realized that terns in

She moved to Washington, D.C., winning a fellowship, worked for the government on the renewed Clean Air Act. Then she was offered a job for

¹² Grossman, E., *A brief biography of Theo Colborn* [online]. [Cited 03.25.2015]. Available from:

http://endocrinedisruption.org/assets/media/documents/Colborn %20bio%20short%20version.pdf

¹³ Colborn, T., Dumanovski, D., Myers, J.,P. Our stolen future: are we threatening our fertility, intelligence, and survival?:a scientific detective story. 1st ed. Plume, 1996. ISBN: 0-452-27414-1

polluted areas neglecting their nests, indifference in usually vigilant nesting Japanese quails about their incubating eggs, missing eyes and clubbed feet in cormorants, diminishing size of the fish testicles in the Baltic, abnormal mating behavior in bald eagles preceded with the appearance of the eggshell thinning and the collapse of the entire eagle population, vanished mink populations, female herring gulls nesting together and feminization of

their male counterparts' reproductive tracts, young birds suffering a mysterious wasting syndrome when thev healthy appeared and normal for days only to begin to languish, waste away and die soon after, children and mothers living near the Lakes who's diet

"Fewer and fewer people will be healthy and intelligent enough to provide the leadership society needs to work toward world peace. Fossilfuel derived chemicals are depriving humanity of its integrity and the fate of the human race should no longer be put at risk because current toxicological testing has failed to detect damage from chemical exposure that does not fall under the current antiquated regulatory rubric." Theo Colborn¹⁴

consisted of lots of fish that were scoring poorly on tests assessing their neurological development lagging behind in measures that tend to predict later IQ; Colborn realized that all the symptoms have one in common; their early development has been compromised.

The recognition of endocrine disruptors has been revolutionary to toxicology for several reasons. In the traditional toxicology the effect of a drug increases with an increasing <u>dose</u>. On the other hand, endocrine disruptors don't respect such a linear fashion rather, very low level of expose can produce serious and lasting health effects. <u>Timing</u> of an exposure is second, no less important factor. They say, "timing is everything", especially in development. In developmental biology, "critical period" refers to an interval in which a tissue or organ is susceptible to an agent. Prior to or after such a period there might be very small or no effect of such an agent while an exposure during the critical period may have a grim outcome. The last important difference between endocrine disruptors vs. traditional toxins is the <u>multigenerational effect</u>. In that regard, endocrine disruption is a piece in the grand mosaic that teaches us about development and inheritance.

Theo Colborn saw that big picture, the whole mosaic. She recognized the widespread disruption of the

> endocrine system as an public international health issue.14 She kept up on statistics that would show a steady rise of neurodevelopmental, cognitive and behavioral issues among children worldwide that leading scientists and pediatricians call a pandemic. Theo Colborn was particularly concerned about the neurological problem that disrupting "nurturing are

relationships between parents and children"¹². She saw endocrine disruption not just a matter of an individual physical fitness rather, that the entire humane kind is at risk of destroying their future.

In 2003, at age 76, Theo Colborn founded The Endocrine Disruption Exchange (TEDX) (www.endocrinedisruption.org), a non-profit research organization committed to endocrine disruptor research. She believed in cross-disciplinary environmental health research and supported and mentored students sometimes six decades younger than she, and held a special encouragement for young women in science. Theo Colborn passed away in December last year at age of 87 years.

¹⁴ Colborne, T. *Endocrine disruption, Public Health, and National and International Security* [online]. PSR, 11.4.2010. [Cited 03. 12[.] 2015]. Available from: <u>http://www.psr.org/environment-and-health/environmental-health-policy-</u>

institute/responses/endocrine-disruption-public-health-andnational-and-international-security.html

Repetitio mater studiorum.... ... Q & A Female Reproductive System

Q1: Ovulation is triggered by a dramatic increase in a hormone called...?

Q2: What is the acidophilic glycoprotein coat that surrounds oocyte?

Q3: What wakes up the primordial follicle from its quiescent state?

Q4: The antral follicle is also called?

Q5: What is ovulated?

Q6: What is the external layer of uterus called?

Q7: What is another name for the greater vestibular gland? And the name for the lesser vestibular glands?

Q8: What is the connective tissue layer around the primary follicle?

Q9: What is called the layer of cells between zona pellucida and basal lamina of the primary follicle?

Q10: During the first 7-10 days of the cycle, what is the main stimulating hormone?

Q11: What are the mature gametes called?

Q12: What is the connective tissue that surrounds ovary?

Q13: Which hormone maintains the corpus lutheum during pregnancy?

Q14: What gland in the male is the homologous to the greater vestibular gland in the female?

Q15: What are follicular cells?



Fig: Life cycle flowering plant¹⁵

A1: LH, luteinizing hormone A2: Zona Pellucida A3: Counterbalance of various stimulatory and inhibitory hormones and locally produced GF 16 A4: Secondary follicle A5 a Graafian follicle A6: Perimetrium A7: Bartholin's gland, and Skene's glands A8: Theca folliculli A9: Stratum granulosum A10: FSH, follicule-stimulating hormone A11: Ova A12: Tunica albuginea A13: hCG, human chorionic gonadothropine A14: Cowper's gland (glandula bulbourethralis) A15: Granulosa cells

¹⁵ Nicole. Life cycle of flowering plants. Flower every[online] Last updated 05.16.2012. [Retrieved 3.27.2015]. Available at: http://www.flowerevery.com/life-cycle-flowering-plant/

¹⁶ Fortune J. et al. *The primordial to primary follicle transition*. Molecular Cell Endocrinology, 2000. **163** (1-2).pp. 53–60.

Membra Jesu nostri patientis sanctissima

"The most holy limbs of our suffering Jesus" is a seven songs oratory composed by **Dietrich Buxtehude** in the 17th century. The gorgeous lyrics, he wrote on Passion medieval texts, provide a medical student with a splendid opportunity to practice her/his Latin. Individual *cantatas* address seven different parts of Christ's crucified body; feet, knees, hands, side, breast, heart, and head.

The gorgeous, meditative music is available e.g. at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWbBK2poJlE

I. Ad pedes

1. Sonata

2. Concerto

Ecce super montes

pedes evangelizantis

et annunciantis pacem

(Behold, upon the mountains the feet of one bringing good news and proclaiming peace)

3. Aria

Salve mundi salutare, salve Jesu chare! Cruci tuae me aptare vellem vere, tu scis quare, da mihi tui copiam 4. Aria Clavos pedum, plagas duras, et tam graves impressuras circumplector cum affectu, tuo pavens in aspectu, tuorum memor vulnerum 5. Aria Dulcis Jesu, pie deus, Ad te clamor licet reus, praebe mihi te benignum, ne repellas me indignum

de tuis sanctis pedibus 6. Concerto

II. Ad genua

1. Sonata 2. Concerto Ad ubera portabimini, et super genua blandicentur vobis 3. Aria Salve Jesu, rex sanctorum, spes votiva peccatorum, crucis ligno tanquam reus, pendens homo verus deus, caducis nutans genibus 4. Aria Quid sum tibi responsurus, actu vilis corde durus? Quid rependam amatori, qui eligit pro memori, ne dupla morte morerer 5. Aria Ut te quaeram mente pura, sit haec mea prima cura, non est labor et gravabor, sed sanabor et mundabor, cum te complexus fuero 6. Concerto III. Ad manus 1. Sonata 2. Concerto Quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum? 3. Aria Salve Jesu, pastor bone,

> fatigatus in agone, qui per lignum es distractus

et ad lignum es compactus

expansis sanctis manibus

4. Aria

Manus sanctae, vos amplector,

et gemendo condelector, grates ago plagis tantis, clavis duris guttis sanctis dans lachrymas cum osculis 5. Aria In cruore tuo lotum me commendo tibi totum, tuae sanctae manus istae me defendant, Jesu Christe, extremis in periculis 6. Concerto

IV. Ad latus

 Sonata
Concerto
Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea, et veni, columba mea
inforaminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae
Aria
Salve latus salvatoris, in quo latet mel dulcoris, in quo patet vis amoris, ex quo scatet fons cruoris, qui corda lavat sordida
Aria
Ecce tibi apropinquo,

parce, Jesu, si delinquo, verecunda quidem fronte, ad te tamen veni sponte scrutari tua vulnera 5. Aria

Hora mortis meus flatus intret Jesu, tuum latus, hinc ex pirans in te vadat, ne hunc leo trux invadat, sed apud te permaneat 6. Concerto V. Ad pectus

1. Sonata

2. Concerto

Sicut modo geniti infantes rationabiles,

et sine dolo concupiscite,

ut in eo crescatis in salutem. Si tamen gustatis, quoniam dulcis est Dominus. 3. Aria Salve, salus mea, deus, Jesu dulcis, amor meus, salve, pectus reverendum, cum tremore contingendum, amoris domicilium 4. Aria Pectus mihi confer mundum, ardens, pium, gemebundum, voluntatem abnegatam, tibi semper conformatam, juncta virtutum copia

5. Aria

Ave, verum templum dei, precor miserere mei, tu totius arca boni, fac electis me apponi, vas dives deus omnium 6. Concerto

VI. Ad cor

Sonata
Concerto
Vulnerasti cor meum,
soror mea, sponsa,
vulnerasti cor meum.
Aria
Summi regis cor, aveto,
te saluto corde laeto,
te complecti me delectar
et hoc meum cor affectar,
ut ad te loguar, animes



4. Aria

Per medullam cordis mei, peccatoris atque rei, tuus amor transferatur, quo cor tuum rapiatur languens amoris vulnere 5. Aria Viva cordis voce clamo, dulce cor, te namque amo, ad cor meum inclinare, ut se possit applicare devoto tibi pectore 6. Concerto Vulnerasti cormeum, soror mea, sponsa, vulnerasti cormeum.

VII. Ad faciem

1. Sonata

2. Concerto

Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum, salvum me fac in misericordia tua 3. Aria Salve, caput cruentatum, totum spinis coronatum, conquassatum, vulneratum, arundine verberatum facie sputis illita 4. Aria Dum me mori est necesse, noli mihi tunc deesse, intremenda mortis hora

veni, Jesu, absque mora,

tuere me et libera me

5. Aria

Cum me jubes emigrare, Jesu chare, tunc appare, o amator amplectende, temet ipsum tunc ostende in cruce salutifera.

6. Concerto

Amen

*

Fig 3: Crucifixion by Giotto yr. 1320-1325, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg, Alsace, France

Wish you enjoy, meditatively, the remaining days of Lent and ...

Happy Easter!



The Internal Newsletter, Third Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague. Editorial Board: MUDr. Klára Matoušková, MPH – editor <u>klara.matouskova@lf3.cuni.cz</u> MUDr. Lucie Hubičková-Heringová, Ph.D. MUDr. Eva Maňáková, Ph.D.

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