Effects of Maternal Protein Malnutrition and Intrauterine Growth Restriction on Redox State of the Central Nervous System in Offspring Rats

Mohamed Aly,1 Adan Gaze1, Goksel Kizil,2 Vatan Kavak,1 Murat Yavuz,2 and Murat Kizil,3 1Department of Neurosurgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Dicle, 21280 Diyarbakir, Turkey, 2Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Dicle, 21280 Diyarbakir, Turkey, and 3Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Dicle, 21280 Diyarbakir, Turkey (kavakv@dicle.edu.tr)

Nutrition plays a crucial role in the maturation and functional development of the central nervous system (CNS). Both maternal protein malnutrition and intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) have deleterious effects on brain development, but a comparison of these effects has not been previously reported. The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of these factors on redox status of CNS including spinal cord in offspring rats. We evaluated various parameters of oxidative status, indexes of damage to lipid, and protein damage in addition to antioxidant enzyme activities of superoxide dismutase and catalase in different regions of CNS from rats subjected to pre-postnatal protein malnutrition (middle 12%, low protein 4%) and IUGR. Results were analyzed by one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey’s post hoc test. Both, protein malnutrition and IUGR altered various parameters of oxidative status. There was an increase in levels of thiobarbituric acid-reactive substances, the index of lipid peroxidation, in the cerebellum, cerebral cortex and spinal cord (P < 0.001) from protein-malnourished rats. Furthermore, IUGR increased lipid peroxidation level in the blood samples (P < 0.04) and protein damage in the cerebellum, cerebral cortex (P < 0.005). The highest decreased in catalase activity was in the cerebellum (P < 0.001). In addition, a significant decrease in antioxidant enzyme activities (P < 0.0001) was observed in the cerebral cortex from protein-malnourished rats. The present data indicated that both protein malnutrition, in different protein contents, and IUGR increased oxidative damage to lipids and proteins from CNS areas.

Taking It to the Edge: Field Studies vs. Museum Studies of Dental Microwear

Mark F. Teaford, Functional Anatomy and Evolution, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, 1830 E. Monument St., Baltimore, MD 21205, USA (mteaford@jhmi.edu)

Dental microwear analysis takes us into interpretations of how teeth are actually used, rather than focusing solely on what they are capable of doing. As a result, these analyses often raise more questions than they answer, as we begin to grapple with the true complexity and diversity of dental wear in different animals, like primates, with varied diets. Field studies would seem to be the ultimate source of information on diet and dental microwear. Yet such studies are difficult and relatively rare. Meanwhile, analyses of museum material, while more feasible, are often harder to interpret, due to a lack of feeding data on the specimens in question. Still, researchers are pushing analyses to their limits. Recent work with field-gathered samples of modern primates shows that the same methods used in museum-based analyses can be successfully applied in the field as well. As a result, these analyses often raise more questions than they answer.

The Auditory Region in the Cainotheriidae: New Information from CT-scans

Jessica M. Theodor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Calgary, 2500 University Dr. NW, Calgary AB, T2N 1N4, Canada (jtheodor@ucalgary.ca)

The Cainotheriidae are well known from numerous specimens and their cranial anatomy is well documented from complete, partial, and disarticulated cranial material. However, high resolution CT scans can provide additional data to resolve problems in the interpretation of the auditory region. Hürzeler’s 1936 (Abh. Schweiz. Paläont. Gesellschaft) description of the auditory region in Cainotherium is highly detailed. He depicts a large flange of the periotic overlapping the margin of the basicapital, and reconstructed the petrosal canal as running in a sulcus along the medial part of this flange. Norris (1999, J. Vert. Paleol.) could not find any such sulcus on the specimens he was able to examine, and suggested that the specimen figured may have been broken, because the figure showed a discontinuity in the periotic. A MicroCT scan of YPM 25037 shows the morphology is more complex. Anteriorly, the periotic has a small projection along the lateral margin, and no medial flange or ridge. The lateral ridge becomes more pronounced posteriorly, and the medial edge of the periotic becomes depressed, forming a deep sulcus in the periotic and restricting the contact between the basioccipital and the periotic to the ventral portion. The periotic does not completely roof over the petrosal canal at any point. Thus, the basioccipital encloses the petrosal canal only on the medial side, unlike the condition seen in cameldids, Bunomeryx, and Merycoidodon.

The Virtual Pig Head: Digital Imaging in Cephalic Anatomy

Jasleen Tickle,1 and Lawrence M. Wuter,2 1Department of Biological Sciences and 2Department of Biomedical Sciences, Ohio University Athens, OH 45701, USA (jt188600@ohio.edu)

Domestic pigs are commonly used as biomedical animal models for several human disease states such as in temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders and mastoid air cell infections. However, unlike the highly successful Visible Human project and similar imaging projects for laboratory rodents and other model animals, no digital representations of pig anatomy exist to aid biomedical researchers. To address this problem, the Virtual Pig Head Project uses digital datasets derived from computed tomography (CT scanning) to construct virtual models for research and education. Multiple specimens of domestic pig were CT scanned at O’Bleness Memorial Hospital, Athens, OH. Moreover, an explant of the TMJ region of an adult pig is scanned to illustrate the digital reconstruction of its fine-scale bony and soft-tissue architecture. All data were imported into powerful 3D visualization software (Amira), and anatomical structures such as bones, muscles, brain, air sinuses, and blood vessels were digitally extracted and visualized; rendering a virtual anatomical atlas of the TMJ region. The utilization of these data in visual comparisons to CT imaging of key human systems highlights interspecies similarities and differences. The Virtual Pig Head has already provided a series of often dramatic 3D visualizations, including virtual dissection and vascular tracings, ultimately to be delivered through an interactive website. These virtual data provide an important new resource for researchers in the biomedical field and beyond.

Exploring the Molecular Basis of Digit Identity

C. Tickle, LA. McDonald and M.E. Fisher; Division of Cell and Developmental Biology, College of Life Sciences, MSL/TWB Building, University of Dundee, Dow Street, Dundee DD1 5EH, UK (cattickle@dundee.ac.uk)

We are taking two approaches to uncovering genes involved in digit identity. In one approach we are pursuing the idea that the molecular code that specifies the identity of digits in the chick wing may parallel the molecular code that specifies the identity of veins in the fly wing. We have constructed, in the chick wing bud, 3D maps of expression of vertebrate homologs of genes encoding transcription factors involved in fly venation and traced the fate of cells that express different combinations of transcription factors. We are also carrying out functional analysis in developing chick wings to test whether these genes might contribute to digit identity. In a second approach, we are using microarrays to identify genes expressed in primordia of different digits in the chick wing. This analysis has uncovered a number of genes whose expression is restricted to a particular digit primordium. These not only represent candidate genes involved in generating digit anatomy but may also provide tools for recognising specific digits.

The Expanded Femur of Tardigrada and Its Morphofunctional Implications

Giuseppe Tito,1 Gerardo De Iuliis2; 1Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra, Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy (g.tito@geo.unifi.it), 2George Brown College and University of Toronto, ON, Canada (gerry.deiulii@utoronto.ca)

Journal of Morphology DOI 10.1002/jmor

ICVM-8 ABSTRACTS 1141