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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

CURRENT CONCEPTS AND CONTROVERSIES IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE



Proceedings of a Symposium
held at Montebello, Quebec
October 21-22, 1983

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CURRENT CONCEPTS AND CONTROVERSIES IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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Preface

This symposium was designed to review recent developments in research on Parkinson's disease with emphasis on controversial issues. Basic and clinical neuroscientists met for two days in Montebello, Quebec. The first day was devoted mainly to the anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology of the basal ganglia. On the second day, the topics were more clinically oriented, focusing on therapeutic considerations. A total of 27 neuroscientists from Canada, USA, England, France and Switzerland participated in the presentations.

Papers were grouped according to selected topics, and the program was intentionally set up to bring together investigators who had previously published conflicting views. This format stimulated much lively and productive discussion. In several areas, a subject was introduced by a keynote speaker who provided a background review, following which the protagonists presented their views. Often, the same title was assigned to two or more speakers. A major objective of the symposium was to resolve controversies, and in several areas this was possible because of new evidence or clarified communication. Where real differences were still found to exist, these were defined with greater precision. The most prominent differences of opinion occurred in the clinical areas. Views as to when levodopa and dopamine agonists should be used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease were quite varied, although there was a trend toward advocating earlier use of both drugs in low dosage.

In addition to identifying and reviewing controversial issues, this symposium provided a platform for important new research topics to be addressed. Since the last major international meeting on Parkinson's disease, progress has been made in two important areas — the role of toxic agents in producing an irreversible parkinsonian syndrome in primates (including man), and the use of positron emission tomography to study brain function in parkinsonian patients. Four papers were devoted to these topics.

We wish to thank the Parkinson Foundation of Canada for their sponsorship and Sandoz Canada Inc. for providing the financial support. In particular, we are grateful to Mr. R. Tubbeh and Mr. R. Slack for their organizational skills and sustained efforts which made this symposium possible.

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