

In memoriam
Pierre Neveu



Fig. 1. Pierre Neveu wore a tie only on special occasions, in this case the Ph.D defense of one his last students, Elodie Merlot, that took place in Paris on November 21, 2003.

Pierre J. Neveu (Fig. 1) died from prostate cancer on July 8, 2005 at 59 years of age. After earning his medical degree, Pierre entered the French Institute of Health and Medical Research where he specialized in immunopharmacology. In 1985, he joined my research team in Bordeaux, France, where he helped develop an integrative research program in psychoneuroimmunology.

When I want to illustrate brain influences on immunity, I always show my students two key slides from Pierre's work. The first slide (Fig. 2) represents the differential effects of ablation of the left cortex and the right cortex on T-cell proliferation in mice, in the form of an asymmetry revealed by the lesion. This result was obtained by Pierre on 1986, and it replicated earlier work from Kathleen Biziere and Guy Renoux who originally discovered this asymmetrical modulation of immunity by the brain. The second slide (Fig. 3) represents the differential mitogen-induced proliferative response of T

cells in left pawed versus right pawed mice. This important finding was obtained by Pierre in 1988, and it brought back to physiology the phenomenon of lateralized brain modulation of immunity. The implications of this phenomenon remained on Pierre's research agenda until his death. During this time, he was even able to show that behavioral lateralization influences both neuroendocrine and behavioral responses to various stressors, including immune stimuli.

Pierre was a dedicated mentor who spent time with his students, cared for them, and made sure they did not embark on sterile fishing expeditions. At the personal level, Pierre was a very lively person who enjoyed the excellent cuisine and wines from Bordeaux. His hobby was buying and selling antiques in the bountiful weekend markets that are held in the counties around Bordeaux. He had a predilection for old postcards and his post-retirement project was to write up the story of

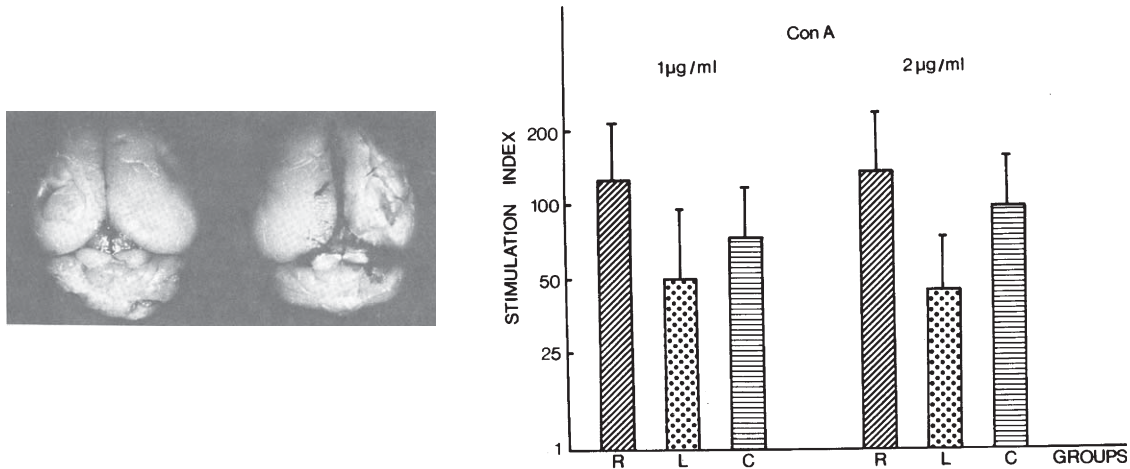


Fig. 2. Differential effects of ablation of the left (L) or right (R) cerebral cortex on proliferative responses of splenocytes to concanavalin A. Splenocyte proliferation was measured by the amount of radioactive thymidine incorporation. Note that left-lesioned mice differ from right-lesioned mice but not from control mice (C), which underwent only anesthesia and craniotomy. The photos represent the extent of ablation of each hemicortex (adapted from Neveu et al., 1986).

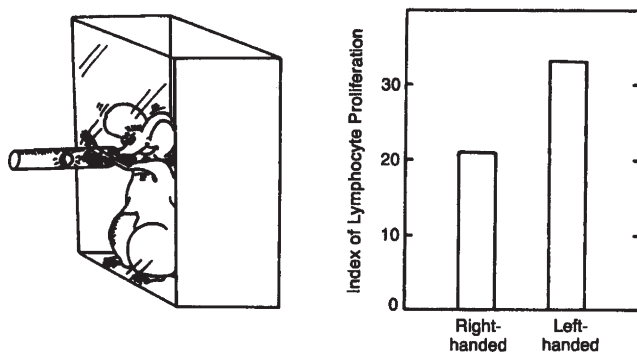


Fig. 3. Influence of behavioral lateralization on proliferative responses of splenocytes to concanavalin A. Mice were categorized as left-pawed or right-pawed based on the paw they used to retrieve a food pellet from a tube. Note that the difference between left-pawed and right-pawed mice is the inverse of the difference observed between left- and right-brain-lesioned mice in Fig. 2 (From Neveu et al., 1988).

the little village near Bordeaux where he was living with his wife, based upon the old postcards he worked so hard to retrieve.

We miss him.

References

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- Neveu, P.J., Taghzouti, K., Dantzer, R., Simon, H., Le Moal, M., 1986. Modulation of mitogen-induced lymphoproliferation by cerebral neocortex. *Life Sci.* 38, 1907–1913.

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