

## Preface

On October 4 and 5, 1990, a symposium on "Neuronal Degeneration in Aging and Disease" was held at the University Hospital, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. The symposium was planned as an outcome of a proposal submitted to the Canadian Networks of Centres of Excellence program entitled "Causes and Prevention of Neuronal Degeneration in Aging and Disease (CPNDAD)". The initial network proposal included 55 participants from 9 universities across Canada and because the collaboration seemed so promising it was agreed that international workshops and symposia should be organized whenever possible. The symposium reported here represents the first of these. There were 30 invited participants, in all, who attended the two day meeting, 18 of whom were from Canada, 11 from the USA and 1 from Switzerland.

The symposium focussed on 4 topics, (1) Development and the Aging Brain, (2) Transmitters and Trophic Factors, (3) Molecular Biology and Proteins and (4) Models to Trials with emphasis on Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Bringing together a number of outstanding Canadian and American scientists produced an extraordinarily rich and diverse exchange of ideas. An important component of the meeting in keeping with the original objective of the Network was the participation of scientists from the pharmaceutical industries. Hoffman-La Roche, Merck Frosst and Upjohn Companies sent scientists who also lead the discussions at the end of each session.

Research is always dependent upon the support of those who appreciate that the accumulation of scientific knowledge is essential to the solution of medical problems. The following sponsors are gratefully acknowledged for their generous support of the symposium: Alzheimer Society of Canada; ALS Society of Canada; ALS Chapters, London, Windsor and Kitchener/Waterloo; Dupont Pharma; Glaxo Canada Inc.; Hoffman-La Roche Limited; Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc.; Medical Research Council of Canada; Merck Frosst Canada Inc.; Parkinson's Foundation, London Chapter; The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; University Hospital Foundation; Upjohn Company of Canada; Staff and friends at the D.B. Weldon Library System of the University of Western Ontario in memory of an ALS patient.

The future plans of the Network on Neuronal Degeneration are to ensure not only that researchers from both the academic and corporate scientific communities meet to exchange ideas but also collaborate at the same scientific level. Arrangements are being made for the next symposium to take place in Montreal in 1992 under the direction of Dr. Serge Gauthier, McGill University.

The articles recorded here merely summarize work that each of the speakers presented. They amply reflect, however, the exciting advances in neurodegenerative disease that are being made by these and other investigators in their field.

*Arthur J. Hudson, MD, (Chairman)*  
*First Symposium on Neuronal Degeneration in Aging and Disease,*  
*London, Canada*