Current Aspects of the Neurosciences

Volume 1

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Edited by
Neville N. Osborne

*Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology
University of Oxford
Oxford OX2 6AW, UK*

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To Antonia and Seth

Contents

Preface	vii
1. Galanin in the Central Nervous System: A Review	1
<i>G. Skofitsch and D. M. Jacobowitz</i>	
2. Atrial Natriuretic Factors and the Central Nervous System: Receptors and Functions	65
<i>J.-G. Chabot, G. Morel and R. Quirion</i>	
3. Trophic and Toxic Influences on Neurons	97
<i>P. Leprince, J.-M. Rigo, B. Rogister, P. Delrée, P. Lefebvre and G. Moonen</i>	
4. Factors Affecting Neurite Outgrowth in Cell Culture	135
<i>P. Doherty and F. S. Walsh</i>	
5. Isolation and Transport Properties of Brain Microvessels	155
<i>P. Cardelli-Cangiano and C. Cangiano</i>	
6. MPTP: A Parkinsonism-causing Neurotoxic Substance	183
<i>R. W. Fuller</i>	
7. Modulation of Dopamine D1 and D2 Transmission Lines in the Central Nervous System	205
<i>K. Fuxe, L. F. Agnati, G. von Euler, F. Benfenati and S. Tanganelli</i>	
8. Molecular Aspects of Muscarinic Receptors	245
<i>G. Berstein and T. Haga</i>	

9. Nervous System Infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus: Biology and Pathogenesis	285
<i>D. H. Gabudza and R. T. Johnson</i>	
Index	311

Preface

Current Aspects of the Neurosciences is intended to help individual scientists, clinicians and, most important, university undergraduates and postgraduates, to keep abreast with progress in the field of the neurosciences. Articles are comprehensive and at the same time focus on areas of current and future interest, thereby identifying and describing issues of importance. Authors of the articles are given a rare opportunity to synthesize and philosophize a little.

The term 'neuroscience' is of relatively recent origin. It was probably first used in its present sense by Rolf W. Gerard in the late 1950s. Neuroscience is an umbrella term covering all those sciences involved in trying to understand how the brain and nervous systems function in general. The whole spectrum of disciplines from molecular neurobiology to all the obvious 'neuro' sciences, e.g. neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, neuroendocrinology, neuropharmacology, neurophysiology, neurotoxicology, constitutes the field of neurosciences. This volume and future issues of *Current Aspects of the Neurosciences* will cover all these fields. An aim of this series is to collect the scattered information from the most topical studies on the brain and other nervous tissues (invertebrate) to allow scientists, clinicians and university students to assess the breadth of current knowledge.

Neuroscience is not without controversy, and many of the most creative and productive investigators are among the most controversial. One neuroscientist may reach a vastly different conclusion from another. The ever-increasing amount of data in many areas is difficult to absorb or interpret. The field as a whole is at a critical stage and requires certain areas to be analysed coherently by experts who can then draw informed conclusions. We hope that this series goes some way towards fulfilling this need.

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N. N. O.