Letter from the President

Anthony Scalfani
Reflections on the Medial Hypothalamus

In a previous President’s letter (September 1990), Gerry Smith advocated an historical perspective to the study of ingestive behavior. Following Gerry’s suggestion, I devote this letter to reflections on the medial hypothalamus. My retrospection was stimulated by an invitation to participate in the 20th Anniversary Symposium of the Columbia Seminar on Appetitive Behavior (March 19, 1992). In 1972, as one of the first seminar speakers, I presented a motivational analysis of the hypothalamic hyperphagia syndrome; in 1992 I was asked to reflect on what has happened in this research area during the past two decades.

In the 1970's the overeating-obesity syndrome produced by medial hypothalamic (MH) damage was under extensive investigation. Much of this research focused on the motivational changes associated with MH hyperphagia and the neural circuitry underlying the syndrome. My first Columbia seminar presented a “resolution of the hypothalamic hyperphagia paradox”; the paradox being the increased food intake, decreased hunger reported in the classic studies of Miller et al. and Teitelbaum in the early and mid 1950’s [3,5]. Our studies revealed that food-deprived MH rats displayed normal food motivation when tested at nonobese weights, but suppressed motivation when tested at obese weight levels. Furthermore, MH rats displayed enhanced food motivation when tested under nondeprived conditions. Based on these results, we suggested that MH damage disrupts an upper body weight “lipostat” that controls appetite, but not a lower “lipostat” that controls hunger [4]. This dual lipostat, appetite-hunger model never became widely accepted. By the mid-1970’s the notion of a body set-point was controversial (remember “settling points”) and a model that postulated two set-points was in trouble.

Also in the mid-1970’s research attention shifted to the metabolic consequences of MH damage. The hyperphagia-obesity syndrome was now considered by many investigators to represent a metabolic rather than a motivational disorder. This shift in focus is evident in the publication record: in the 1970’s there was an average of six reports per year on motivational aspects of MH hyperphagia which dropped to less than two per year in the 1980’s, and to less than one per year in the 1990’s. (During this time my laboratory was encouraged to pursue other research interests by several “approved, but not funded” grant applications on the MH hyperphagia syndrome.)

Do It Now!

Several “action items” accompany this issue:
- Students who would like to attend the ICPFFI meeting in Oxford should apply for the travel fellowships sponsored by SSIB and ICPFFI. See page 3 for details; deadline is January 29!
- It’s time to submit titles for the annual SSIB dinner meeting in conjunction with EPA, so be sure to send in your form and payment by February 24. See the enclosed Call for Papers.
- An international research workshop on obesity treatment will be held in New York. Application deadline is February 28; see page 6.

January 1993
The etiology of the hyperphagia-obesity syndrome was clarified by 1985 with the discovery that there were distinct metabolic and behavioral components to the syndrome. Lesions of the ventromedial nucleus (VMN) were found to produce a “metabolic” obesity whereas lesions of the paraventricular nucleus (PVN) produce a “regulatory” obesity, i.e., obesity secondary to overeating [6]. Also, the overeating component was attributed to the destruction of a PVN-hindbrain pathway [2]. Although the PVN “regulatory” obesity syndrome is a superior model to study the neurobehavioral basis of overeating, it has received little attention; hypothalamic hyperphagia is no longer a “hot” topic. The PVN continues to be at the center of exciting research on the neurochemical control of food intake and nutrient selection. Yet the relationship between these neurochemical feeding systems and hypothalamic hyperphagia is not known.

It is, of course, natural for research interests to change as old problems are resolved and new problems revealed. Sometimes, however, the old problems are not solved but await new ideas or techniques. Such is the case, I suggest, for the MH syndrome. The discovery of the hypothalamic obesity syndrome by Hetherington and Ranson in the early 1940’s [1] is a major landmark in the modern study of ingestive behavior. It may be time to take a fresh look at an old syndrome.

References

Student Section News
We need your opinion! Although the Board will not meet until at least April, at, EPA, SSIB President Tony Sclafani has given us some feedback and requests.

Travel awards: Currently the reviewers are the President, President-Elect and Past-President. Awards are based solely on the abstract quality. The Finance committee currently is responsible for soliciting corporate donations, and the amount of funding available for travel awards is dependent on their success. Paige is working on finding out whether students can become involved in the fund-raising efforts and in the selection process. The difficulty is that any student involved on the selection committee could not be eligible to apply.

Concerning criteria for the awards, Tony would like to know what the consensus is regarding whether someone who received one in the previous year should be eligible the next year, or whether a one-year interim should be instituted. The amount of the award this year will depend on travel costs to the meeting.

Other news: As a member of the Student and Nutrition Divisions of the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT), I have written a short letter to them describing SSIB and how to obtain a membership application for inclusion in their newsletter.

I recently ran across what has proven to be a fertile source for position announcements—The Minority and Women Doctoral Directory. Listing in this Directory is free, and resulted in almost a dozen position announcements in only about three months!

If anyone has any other helpful hints, suggestions, or questions–pass them along for inclusion in the next edition!

Nancy Rawson  Tel 215 898-0943  Fax 215 898-2084
Paige Israel  Tel 206 543-9515  Fax 206 685-3157

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SSIBlings
Abstract forms are enclosed with the second circular; they must be accompanied by a completed registration form and full fees, and sent to the secretariat by March 31. Accepted abstracts will be assigned as oral or poster by Organising Committee; preference for a session type may be indicated on the form.

If you have not received the second circular, contact the Secretariat: Ms Anna Morris, CPD Centre, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA England. Tel +44 865 270286/270373; Fax +44 865 270284. E-mail AMORRIS@VAX.OX.AC.UK

If you have comments or suggestions about the conference program, contact the organizer: Edmund T. Rolls, University of Oxford, Department of Experimental Psychology, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX13UD England. Tel +44 865 271348; Fax +44 865 310447. E-mail EROLLS@VAX.OX.AC.UK

SSIB-ICPFFI Travel Awards
Travel fellowships will be available for students to attend the ICPFFI meeting. Graduate students and first or second year post-doctoral fellows who will be first authors on abstracts submitted to the meeting are eligible to apply for the awards, which will vary from $300 to $1000 depending upon the travel distance to Oxford. The SSIB-ICPFFI Award committee consists of Barbara Rolls, Terry Powley, Anthony Sclafani, Gerard Smith, Edward Stricker, and Stephen Woods.

Applicants for travel fellowships should submit by January 29, 1993 a preliminary abstract of their presentation*, a one-page curriculum vitae, a cover letter detailing the projected expenses and a supporting letter from their faculty sponsor to:
Edward M. Stricker, Ph.D., Department of Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Pittsburgh, 479 Crawford Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 USA

* The second circular from ICPFFI includes an application form for the award; if the form has not yet reached you, please be sure to include the following information with your abstract: full name, graduate institution, postdoctoral institution, year of graduation, and sponsor’s name.
Researchers may have noticed an increase in comments concerning the use of restricted access to water as a method for preparing animals for behavioral research. Some of this intensified interest stems from the publication of a purported "case study" in which an IACUC rejected a principal investigator's (PI's) research protocol to study visual discrimination in monkeys maintained by water reinforcement [10]. Orlans, a research associate in the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, later admitted that her article is not a case study but a "composite" of several experiences [11], and was criticized for this by the journal's editors and readers [1,4]. The article illustrates several things that may cause the relationship between the PI and IACUC to flounder. These issues are outlined below.

Basing legal decisions upon opinion rather than solid data. IACUCs appear ready to accept the Orlans [10] publication as definitive, although it is an opinion piece lacking sufficient review of the literature to justify scientific conclusions. Although each research proposal must now show that a literature search has found the proposed work to be non-duplicative, the ideas of Orlans were widely disseminated without such a burden. It seems only fair that both critics and advocates of research be held to the same high standards of logic and proof to justify their conclusions. "It seems only fair that both critics and advocates of research be held to the same high standards of logic and proof to justify their conclusions."

There is insufficient literature and insufficient searching of the literature. Although there is a substantial, and growing literature to indicate health benefits of restricted access to food [5-7, 12] and even of forced exercise [9], there seems to be less of a literature upon which to base solid decisions concerning the effects of restricted access to water. Even scientists tend to overestimate the animal's need for fluid because of their personal experiences in a society where humans ingest great volumes of fluids for social reasons, rather than for physiological fluid need. Orlans overlooked an earlier review of controlled access to water with monkeys [3]. She asserts that a variety of alternative motivational procedures could have been used to motivate monkeys to perform visual discrimination, but not a single reference was provided to guide the reader to published, exemplary research.

It is important to recognize the fact that animal behavior is highly adaptive. Psychopharmacologists know how adaptive behavior can be; it is a primary mechanism of coping with changes in the environment, including "evolutionary stress." Several publications document the adaptable nature of drinking. Monkeys can drink 25% of their daily water needs in 15 min [14] and rats similarly learn to drink large volumes in brief periods [2,8]. None were cited by Orlans [10,11].

The burden was on the investigator to rebut a wide variety of assertions. The IACUC rejected as unsubstantiated the PI's request for continued use of the protocol to ensure continuity with the previous stages of on-going research. Orlans [10] suggests that it is the PI's burden to demonstrate, either through citations to a barely existent literature or through his own methodological research, that alternative motivational procedures would, in fact, create an unsatisfactory change in the experimental model. Unfortunately, the IACUC concluded that the restricted watering subjected the monkeys to "unjustified mental suffering," without providing any measure of suffering. It was the PI's burden to prove the absence of mental suffering. The PI was also asked to answer whether "daily dehydration would affect the monkey's vision and, therefore, the researcher's results." Unfortunately, this question leads to a logical cul-de-sac, since any alternative method (behavioral, physiological, cellular) can be expected to cause some measurable change in one physiological parameter or another. It seems of little interest to the IACUC that an unanesthetized, freely behaving animal can be justified as the least intrusive of the alternative techniques. Orlans suggests that the investigator provide extensive documentation of good health, e.g., daily water intake, urine volume and specific gravity, and sequential multiple analysis of blood.

The IACUC's logic was not applied consistently to all aspects of this issue. Inconsistent application of logic often hinders debate within an IACUC, and the
inconsistencies are compounded when one compares the deliberations of different IACUCs. The IACUC found that dispensing water as response-contingent rewards caused monkeys to “suffer severe distress from long periods of water deprivation followed by drop-by-drop water administration.” Orlans failed to indicate how this method of water presentation differed from the “foraging” recommended by many veterinarians and animal sympathizers who believe that bite-for-bite food administration is beneficial, i.e., forcing monkeys to search and work for hidden pieces of food rather than be given an entire portion at one feeding [e.g., 13]. Instead, this IACUC considered food restriction an unacceptable experimental method because it is “a type of punishment.” A reasoned examination is provided by Laties [7].

**Policy and philosophy.** This debate hinges upon assertions (e.g., “mental stress”) which have no agreed-upon measures in animals, but are strongly held by some as a matter of belief. This reminds me of the debate over abortion: some people take philosophical or religious objections to a practice that is acceptable to others. In a democracy, people should not be forced to engage in animal research against their will, but people of one religious persuasion should not use society’s institutions, legal and financial penalties to restrict the freedom of nonbelievers.

Orlans [10] asserts that the PI’s need for a test session of over 1 hour was a “convenience to himself...and not of benefit to the animal.” There are very few instances when an animal’s participation in laboratory research can be seen as of benefit to the animal; thus, one might assume that all lab studies will fall short on this philosophy. To interpret the PI’s need for enough data to answer the research question as a “convenience” rather than a necessity, creates an additional philosophical dilemma: if the PI stops short, with scanty and fragmented data, the project may be dismissed as pointless and fruitless. If the PI persists until sufficient data have been gathered, the project can be criticized as excessive and unjustified. What type of research, exactly, could escape criticism on one or the other grounds?

**Please contribute information.** An upcoming workshop will examine issues in behavioral research methods with animals. I will help to collect information on improving relationships between PIs and IACUCs and on the issue of restricted access to water. Please send information to me at New York University Medical Center, Dept. of Environmental Medicine, New York, NY 10016.

**References**


Dr. Evans is Chair of the American Psychological Association Committee on Animal Research and Ethics, and a member of The Society for Neuroscience. He is preparing a technical paper on water restriction for IACUCs and investigators of animal behavior. He would appreciate both references and accounts of experiences with IACUCs.
Meetings

**Human Obesity: Current Status of Scientific and Clinical Progress** is a special two-day seminar at AAAS '93, the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). February 12-13, 1993; Boston, MA. Organizers: David B. Allison and F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer. For more information contact AAAS: Tel 202-326-6781 Fax 202-289-4021.

**The European Winter Conference on Brain Research** convenes in La Plagne, France from March 13-20, 1993. Sessions of interest to SSIB members include:

- J. Fernstrom–Neurochemistry and feeding behaviour in animals and humans
- A.B. Steffens–Central nervous control of behavioural, neuroendocrine and metabolic responses to a reduction in availability in energy substrate
- R. Miselis–The brain-gut axis

Abstracts were due in December; registration was due January 8. If you are interested in attending this conference, but have not yet registered, contact the Secretary immediately!

Stylianos Nicolaëdis
C.N.R.S. Lab. de Neurobiologie des Regulations
College de France
Chaire de Neurophysiologie
11, place Marcelin Berthelot
75231 Paris cedex 05, France
Tel. 44 27 14 01 Fax 44 27 14 12

**The annual meeting of the Association for Chemoreception Sciences (AChemS)** will be held April 14-18, 1993 in Sarasota, FL. Abstracts were due (postmarked) by Jan. 11.

For further information, contact:
Dr. John DeSimone
Dept. of Physiology
Virginia Commonwealth University
Box 551, MCV
Richmond, VA 23298 USA
Tel 804-786-9578, Fax 804-371-7382

**Obesity Treatment: Establishing Goals, Improving Outcomes, and Reviewing the Research Agenda** is an international research workshop co-sponsored by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the New York Obesity Research Center. June 3-5, 1993; New York, NY. Organizing committee: F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, David B. Allison, Jules Hirsch, Per Björntorp, Albert J. Stunkard, and Claude Bouchard.

Limited space is available for attendees. Attendees may be invited from two categories: 1) Established scientists working in the field of obesity, and 2) Young Investigators (less than 6 years post-doc). Some funding may be available to defray expenses for a limited number of young investigators. To apply, send your curriculum vita and a brief letter explaining your interest in this workshop and present role in the area of obesity by February 28 to:

David Allison
Obesity Research Center
St. Luke's/Roosevelt Hospital Center
411 West 114th Street
Suite 3D, New York, NY 10025 USA
Tel 212-523-1601, Fax 212-523-3571.

**The 7th International Congress on Obesity** will meet August 20-25, 1994 at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This meeting carries AMA Category I study credits. For further information, contact:

Continuing Education
Faculty of Medicine
University of Toronto
Medical Sciences Building, Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A8 CANADA
Tel 416-978-2718, Fax 416-978-7144

**Looking ahead:**

**The 1994 SSIB meeting**
...will be in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, under the joint direction of Harvey Weingarten and Don Cosicina. It is timed to precede the 7th International Congress on Obesity (above). This will be our second independent meeting; like the first, it will have an academic setting, McMaster University.

The meeting begins early on Wednesday morning, August 17th and continues thru late afternoon Saturday the 20th. Thus, in order not to miss the opening festivities and sessions, participants should plan to arrive at McMaster on Tuesday the 16th.

The Organizing Committee is beginning to meet to plan the conference. If anyone has suggestions or opinions about the content and structure of the meeting, please relay them to Harvey, preferably via E-mail (WEINGART@SSCVAX.MCMASTER.CA).
Post-doctoral and/or research position available in the study of the ontogeny of fetal thirst and swallowing and the endocrine regulation of maternal-fetal fluid balance. Studies utilize both the chronically instrumented ovine model as well as in vitro models of fetal gastrointestinal development. Contact Michael Ross, M.D., Perinatal Research Laboratories, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Torrance, CA 90609, Tel 310-533-3544 for further information.

Tenure-track Assistant Professor
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Dept. of Nutritional Sciences is seeking an Assistant Professor to serve as Director of Didactic Program in Dietetics, conduct research in human nutrition, and teach in the dietetics program. Preference given to candidates with clinical nutrition experience; Ph.D. in nutrition or related field and R.D. required. Strong publication record and 2-3 years of postdoctoral experience preferred. Candidate will be expected to attract outside funding and develop a national reputation as a research scholar. Research programs should provide opportunities for training of graduate students. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, statement of research and teaching interests, and three letters of recommendation to Dr. Adria R. Sherman, Chair, Department of Nutritional Sciences, Cook College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0231. Tel 908-932-9379, Fax 908-932-6837. Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Employer.

Postdoctoral position available
Dr. Don Cosicina is considering taking on a new post-doctoral fellow in his Biopsychology lab. The position would be a soft-funded one for a minimum of 2 years. Some sources of potential funding require the interested candidates to submit directly to the sponsoring agencies, with supporting documentation to be provided by the supervisor. Interested persons should contact Don by any of the means listed below ASAP, as well as for information surrounding the types of research to be pursued and the facilities available to accomplish it.

Don Cosicina: Tel 416-979-6821 (work), 416-278-3288 (home) Fax 416-979-7871. Bitnet: BPSYCH@VM.UCTS.UTORONTO.CA

Postdoctoral position available
Beginning July 1, 1993, A postdoctoral position to study human eating behavior will be available at St. Luke’s/Roosevelt Hospital Center (WH-10, 114th & Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025 USA). Because the position is funded by an NIH training grant, it is restricted to U.S. citizens and resident aliens. This is an ideal position for someone interested in starting or continuing human research based on previous work with animals. Send your resume and a brief letter indicating your research goals to Dr. Harry R. Kissileff, at St. Luke’s, by March 1, 1993. For additional information contact Dr. Kissileff (Tel 212-523-4200).

Postdoctoral Position Available
Use novel surgical and/or infusion techniques to study changes in meal intake, daily food intake, energy expenditure and body weight. Learn intestinal and/or transplant surgery, chronic infusions into various vascular sites in freely moving rats, measurement of 24 hour oxygen consumption, radioactive tracer techniques for analysis of stomach emptying and intestinal transit and/or measurements of plasma hormones and metabolites.

The post-doctoral position begins in summer of 1993 and lasts for at least 2 years. If interested, send vita, three letters of reference and statement of research interests to Henry Koopmans, Dept. of Medical Physiology, Health Sciences Centre, Univ. of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 4N1. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and landed immigrants, but all eligible candidates are encouraged to apply.

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Buried Treasures

Steven J. Cooper has listed a number of "buried treasures", those chapters that have gotten limited exposure due to the specialized nature of the books they occupy.


From the Editor's desk...

We’re still working on accuracy of the SSIB membership database. Thanks to those who updated their addresses and other contact information on their dues notices. All members please note: Fax numbers weren’t printed on the dues notices, which means that you didn’t have an opportunity to add or change that item. Please check the directory and send us an update if we’re not current.

Send all address changes to Suzanne Sunday, who maintains our member database. This includes E-mail addresses; please indicate the full address, including the network (e.g., Bitnet). Be especially careful when recording this information, because illegibility might make it impossible for us to find you! Postal codes with mixtures of letters and numbers can be particularly difficult, Suzanne notes.

Calendar

These are the scientific meetings recorded on SSIB’s calendar to date. Contact Karen Ackoff to add items to this list, which appears in every issue.

- Human Obesity seminar at the annual AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) meeting, Boston, February 12-13
- European Winter Conference on Brain Research, La Plagne, March 13-20
- British Feeding and Drinking Group, Brighton, March 25-26
- AChemS: Association for Chemopreception Sciences, Sarasota, FL, April 14-18
- EPA: Eastern Psychological Association, Arlington, VA, April 16-18. (SSIB dinner meeting April 17)
- Obesity Treatment workshop, New York, June 3-5
- ICSFC: 2nd Food Choice Conference, a satellite meeting of the International Union of Nutrition Science Congress, Canberra, October 1-3.
- Society for Neuroscience, Washington, D.C., November 7-12.

1994:
- SSIB’s second independent meeting, Toronto, Ontario, August 17-20
- ICO: 7th International Congress on Obesity, Toronto, Ontario, August 20-25
- Society for Neuroscience, Miami, FL, November 13-18.

Address changes
- Randall R. Sakai is now a Research Assistant Professor in Animal Biology.
  Department of Biology
  Leidy Lab 307
  University of Pennsylvania
  Philadelphia, PA 19104-6018 USA
  E-mail: RSAKAI@SAS.UPENN.EDU

Matthew J. Wayner, Ph.D.
Attn: Editorial Office
Division of Life Sciences
The University of Texas at San Antonio
6900 North Loop 1604 West
San Antonio, TX 78249-0662 USA
Tel: 210-691-4481 Fax: 210-691-4510
Bitnet: EDITOFF@UTSAVM1
- E-mail address changes:
  Al Sipols: sipols@u.washington.edu
  Sue Gowans: gowans@casbah.acns.nwu.edu
- Fax: Don Cosicina 416-979-7871

Donations to the Alan Epstein Memorial Fund have been used to begin a lecture series at the University of Pennsylvania. The lecture is a new highlight in the annual Behavioral Neuroscience Student Research Symposium at Penn. This is an appropriate way to honor Alan, who was a major promoter of professional activities for students. He was instrumental in obtaining the training grant that sponsors this retreat, which gives students and junior faculty a chance to present their work.

The first Alan N. Epstein Memorial Lecture was given by Steve Woods, who spoke about central insulin and the regulation of body weight. SSIB members Nancy Rawson, Randy Seeley, and Dr. Randall Sakai also participated in the meeting, held on September 18, 1992.
Society for the Study Of Ingestive Behavior

Spring Meeting and Dinner
at The Eastern Psychological Association Convention
Hyatt Regency Crystal City
Arlington VA
Friday, April 16, 1993

Call for Papers

Your are invited to attend the spring meeting of The Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior at the Eastern Psychological Association Convention on Friday, April 16, 1992. We will begin at 5:00 PM with a cocktail party and dinner from 6:00 - 7:30 PM in the Tidewater Room at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City. This will be followed by 5-min talks (maximum of 2 slides) from 8:00 - 10:00 PM (Tidewater Room).

Please select on of the following dinners:

- Baked Double Breast of Chicken (filled with ricotta, mozzarella and provolone, accompanied by tomato cream sauce, pasta, and fresh vegetables; coffee or tea, cappuccino cake)
- Sautéed Virginia Trout (with scallions and mushrooms, a pecan and rice medley; coffee or tea, warm apple and raisin crisp)

and enclose a check for:

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Please make checks payable to SSIB in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or in Canadian dollars drawn on a Canadian bank.

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________________________

Student Faculty sponsor: ____________________________

I would like to present a 5-minute talk.

Title: ____________________________________________

Please return this form by February 24 to:

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ANTHONY L. RILEY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC 20016 USA