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<DOCHEAD>Letter to the Editor**Introductory letter from the Guest Editors**

As Guest Editors of Journal Pharmacology Research it is our pleasure to introduce the Special Issue *Country in focus: Pharmacology in Argentina*

Argentina has three Nobel Prize winners related to Medicine or Biology; it may not be a coincidence that each one of them was related to the world of Pharmacology. It also has given birth to a lot of scientists of high academic quality. Here are their biographical sketches.

•Dr. Bernardo Alberto Houssay

Born in Buenos Aires on April 10, 1887. For his doctoral thesis "Studies of the Physiological Action of the Pituitary Extracts." Houssay became a professor at the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) around 1910. He founded the Institute of Biology and Experimental Medicine in 1944. In 1947, Houssay won the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine "for his discovery of the part played by the hormone of the anterior pituitary lobe in the metabolism of sugar". He had spent years investigating the role of pituitary hormones in regulating blood sugar, making advances in the understanding of diabetes. Houssay shared the prize with Carl and Gerty Cori, who also explored how the human body metabolizes sugar. After winning the Nobel Prize, Houssay spent some time in the USA. He was appointed the Hitchcock Professor of Physiology at the University of California. Houssay remained in Argentina and was officially reinstated as director of the Institute of Physiology in 1955. He spent his last years directing the Argentine National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET) which he had conceived and founded in 1957. The mission of this government organization is to create new scientific careers, support research institutes, and contrast the emigration of technically skilled personnel. Houssay died at the age of 84 on September 21, 1971, in Buenos Aires.

•Dr. Luis Federico Leloir

Born on September 6, 1906, in París of Argentine parents. Luis Leloir graduated from Medical School (UBA) in 1932. In 1934-35 he worked with Prof. Bernardo A. Houssay, who predisposed his curiosity in the metabolism of adrenaline carbohydrate. In 1936 he spent a year at the University of Cambridge's Biochemical Laboratory (England) before returning to the Institute of Physiology, where he studied the oxidation of fatty acids in liver. After traveling to the USA in 1944, he worked as a research assistant in St. Louis, Missouri, and at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. Since then he has been Director of the Institute of Biochemical Research, Fundación Campomar in 1947. In 1970, Leloir won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his sugar nucleotides discovery, which help the body store certain sugars and transform them into energy. He died on December 2, 1987, in Buenos Aires.

•**Dr. César Milstein**

Born on October 8, 1927, in Bahía Blanca. Milstein attended the universities of Buenos Aires and Cambridge (PhD in 1960) and was on the staff of the National Institute of Microbiology in Buenos Aires (1957–63). Thereafter he was a member of the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, England, and held dual Argentine and British citizenship. In 1975, working with Köhler, Milstein advanced one of the most powerful tools of molecular biology: monoclonal antibody production, a technique that has changed the way we do research and we treat patients. In 1984, together with Georges Köhler and Niels K. Jerne he received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his research on the discovery of monoclonal antibodies. He died on March 24, 2002 in Cambridge, England.

Other leading pharmacologists in Argentina

•**Dr. Salomon Langer** was born in 1936 in Buenos Aires. In 1960 he graduated from the School of Medicine (UBA). In 1963, he joined the Department of Pharmacology at Harvard University, studying the mechanisms involving denervation supersensitivity with Ullrich Trendelenburg. He spent two years (1967-69) in Cambridge, England with Leslie Iversen and Marthe Vogt where he became interested in noradrenaline (NA) uptake and release induced by nerve stimulation. In 1969, Dr. Langer came back to Argentina where he was appointed Director of the Institute for Pharmacological Research (ININFA), created in 1968 from CONICET. The research conducted at the ININFA during the period 1969-1976. In 1974, Dr. Langer and his colleagues **Drs Francisco J. E. Stefano, Maria Amelia de los Angéles Enero and Edda Adler-Graschinsky** characterized the pharmacological differences between inhibitory presynaptic α 1-adrenoceptors and α 2-adrenoceptors in noradrenergic nerve terminals and how they contribute to modulate the release of NA during nerve stimulation.

• **Dr. Daniel P. Cardinali** was born in 1943 in Buenos Aires. He received his MD and PhD degrees at the Salvador University, Buenos Aires. He joined CONICET as researcher in 1971 to become subsequently Professor of Physiology at the School of Medicine, UBA. Presently he is the Director of the Department of Teaching and Research, School of Medical Sciences, Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina, and Professor Emeritus at UBA. He became interested in the physiology and pharmacology of melatonin and biological rhythms related to sleep medicine.

Several other Argentinian scientists have contributed and continue to contribute to the quest for pharmacological discoveries. Among them

• **Dr. Alfredo Coviello** and his group analyzed “The mechanism of regulation of sodium and water intake by angiotensin-2”.

• **Dr. Juan Izquierdo** searched “The regulation of sympathetic and parasympathetic neurotransmission”.

• **Dr. Luis Maria Zieher** was one pioneer in the study of “Regulation of synapses in the central nervous system”.

- The group led by **Drs. Marta and Alvaro Gimeno** investigated “The role of prostaglandins in the regulation of uterine motility”.
- Identification of hormone erythropoietin was investigated from **Dr. Joaquín Espada** and collaborators.

This is just a small sketch, but from it you can have a glimpse on how Argentina has a solid and long history in scientific research that bodes well for the future. This Special Issue: **Pharmacology in Argentina** represents recognition of our efforts in quality research.

Conflict of interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the letter.

Best regards,

Your sincerely

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