# DEVELOPMENT OF THERAPEUTIC AGENTS FOR SICKLE CELL DISEASE

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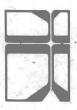
Proceedings of the International Meeting on Development of Therapeutic Agents for Sickle Cell Disease held in Paris (France), 19-21 July, 1978.

Sponsored by the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, France and the National Institute of Health, Sickle Cell Disease Branch, U.S.A.

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#### PREFACE

This symposium was the outcome of planning that was started in 1977 by Dr. HERCULES and myself during the Fourth International Conference on Red Cell Metabolism and Function in Ann Arbor. We came to an agreement that it would be a good opportunity to organize a meeting on the antisickling drugs. Indeed for several years now, a substantial effort has been made throughout the world to develop such drugs. After the initial promise resulting from the early studies performed with urea and cyanate, it became apparent that the treatment of sickling could not be overcome without a multiple approach. Since that time, a great deal of work has been done to understand the basic phenomena underlying the polymerization of Hb S, including X-ray analysis of Hb S crystals and of Hb S fibers. The intermolecular contacts have also been studied using naturally occuring double mutants or artificial mixtures of Hbs. Several tests have been evaluated for their efficiency to analyse the action of antisickling agents. The physiology of the sickle erythrocytes has been extensively studied and compared with that of normal erythrocytes. A large number of new drugs have been studied during these last years and the extracorporeal administration of some drugs has also been assessed.

On the other hand, the prenatal diagnosis of sickle cell anemia has become operational. It appeared to us to be a very opportune moment for the first general discussion of all the results obtained on this topic. In order to allow as large a participation as possible of peoples interested in progress in the therapy of the Sickle Cell Disease, i.e. in addition to the Americans, members of the Arrican community, it became evident to us that a very good opportunity would be to organize such a meeting as a satellite Symposium of the XVII International Congress of Hematology which will be held in Paris in July 1978.

We therefore decided to obtain support from our respective administrations. Dr. HERCULES was able to obtain the agreement of the N.I.H. Several participants from the U.S.A and from Africa could thus be supported by N.I.H. grants. On our part, we were able to interest Dr. LAUDAT, the Scientific Director of the I.N.S.E.R.M., in this project; and I.N.S.E.R.M. support was sufficiently generous to cover the conference costs as well as the travel costs of some American, African and European people. The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) provided an excellent conference room in the center of Paris adjacent to the Seine and just between the Place de la Concorde and St Germain des Prés. The CNRS also provided an excellent French buffet with French wines and American bourbon ! We can claim that the Symposium was a success. Dr. Max PERUTZ opened the Meeting with a superb conference on the stereochemistry of Hb S and every one present greatly enjoyed having him again with them.

The large confrontation between all the Scientists who attended this meeting has produced results which can be very fruitful for both the scientist and physician implicated in the treatment of sickle cell anemia, particularly since one often encounters difficulties in evaluating correctly the action of the various new drugs claimed to be active as antisickling agents.

The printed papers provide the content of all the oral presentations but unfortunately, it was not possible to publish the discussions, which were very lively and sometimes very critical.

We owe to Dr. Yves BEUZARD our gratitude for the excellence of the organization of this Symposium. Our thanks should also be extended to the very efficient and courteous help of the secretaries Chantal RONCIN, Martine SEGEAR and Anne Marie DULAC.

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## NORMAL AND SICKLE ERYTHROCYTES