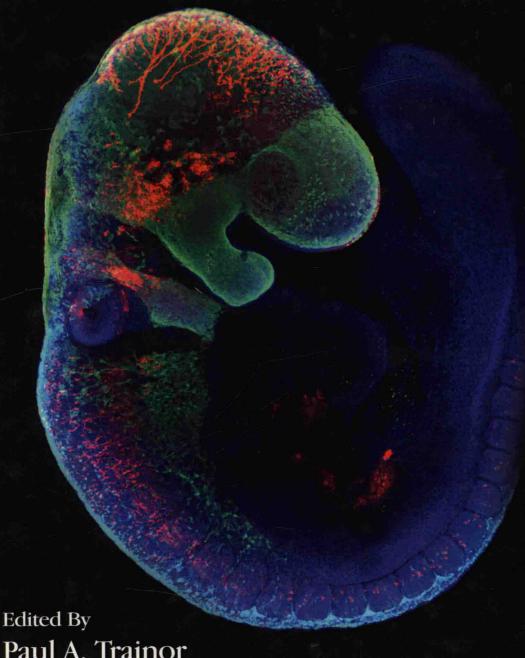
Neural Crest Cells

Evolution, Development and Disease



Paul A. Trainor

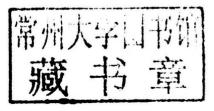


NEURAL CREST CELLS

Evolution, Development and Disease

Edited by

Paul A. Trainor







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Cover Figure

The cover figure was kindly provided by Amanda Barlow and is of a late E9.5 DAPI nuclear stained (blue) mouse embryo illustrating the distribution of neural crest cells (green) and the commencement of their differentiation into neurons (red).

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NEURAL CREST CELLS

Preface

Neural crest cells comprise a migratory, stem and progenitor cell population and are synonymous with vertebrate evolution and development. Although thought to have been first identified by William His in 1868, the term neural crest is attributed to Arthur Milnes Marshall in recognition of the cells anatomical origins. Over the past 145 years, neural crest cells have held the fascination of developmental and evolutionary biologists alike by providing a unique paradigm with which to study various developmental processes such as morphogenetic induction, migratory behaviors, and fate determination.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the majority of neural crest cell research was undertaken in amphibian embryos as reviewed in Horstadius' well-known 1950 monograph. The 1960s saw the introduction of tritiated thymidine cell labeling techniques employed by Weston and Chibon to visualize the migration of neural crest cells throughout the developing amphibian and chick embryos. This was followed shortly thereafter in 1969 through Nicole Le Douarin's seminal introduction of the quail-chick marking system. While similar in principle to the earlier generation of amphibian chimeras by German embryologists such as Andres and Wagner, this now enabled embryologists to distinguish neural crest cells of one species from the surrounding tissue of another species. With this technique, generations of scientists reliably marked and studied the properties of neural crest cells, the principles of which were detailed in Nicole Le Douarin's

1982 book "The Neural Crest." These chimera approaches remain a fundamental staple of neural crest cell research today.

The year 1983 marked another seminal year in the neural crest cell field. Drew Noden illustrated the remarkable properties of cranial neural crest cells and Carl Gans and Glen Northcutt published their "New Head" hypothesis which posited the central importance of neural crest cells in the endless variation of vertebrate craniofacial features throughout evolution. In the late 1980s, new vital dyes cell labeling techniques pioneered by Marianne Bronner and Scott Fraser opened the door to visualizing neural crest cells in any species, but particularly fish and mice. This afforded the opportunity in combination with advances in imaging to follow the dynamics of neural crest cells in real time. Together with advances in molecular techniques, all of these techniques collectively facilitated the study of comparative neural crest cell development, fate, and evolution, highlighting the interplay between patterning and plasticity and spurring the quest to identify the evolutionary origins of neural crest cells. These principles and developments were captured in Brian Hall's 1999 "The Neural Crest in Evolution and Development" and Jean-Pierre Saint Jeannet's 2006 "Neural Crest Induction and Differentiation" books.

In the twenty-first century, much of our focus now revolves around the contributions of neural crest cells to congenital disorders and diseases which are collectively termed neurocristopathies. Understanding the true **XİV** PREFACE

genetic and cellular etiology and pathogenesis of individual neurocristopathies offers the potential for developing therapeutic avenues for their clinical prevention. Furthermore, continuing advances have uncovered and characterized the pluripotent stem cell-like characteristics of neural crest cells during embryogenesis and their persistence into adulthood. Thus, there is tremendous excitement in the potential for neural crest cells to be used in tissue engineering and regenerative medicine. This book "Neural Crest Cells: Evolution, Development and Disease" ambitiously tries to capture the classic principles and recent advances in our comprehension of the roles of neural crest cells in vertebrate evolution and development. Much of this has come from the application of new genetic, imaging and systems biology approaches exploring the gene regulatory control of neural crest cell formation, migration, and differentiation. This book also illustrates how this foundational knowledge influences our understanding of the central roles neural crest cells play in the pathogenesis of congenital disorders and diseases and the potential for neural crest cells to be used in tissue engineering and regenerative medicine to treat disorders and disease.

I am extremely grateful to all of the authors for sharing their time, knowledge, and expertise in contributing chapters to this book. I also want to thank all the past and present members of my laboratory as well as colleagues and friends in the neural crest cell field for continually making science and life stimulating and fun.

Acknowledgment

I am indebted to Patrick Tam and Robb Krumlauf for introducing me to neural crest cells and for their scientific training and continual support, mentorship, and friendship.

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning."

Albert Einstein

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Contents

Preface xiii Acknowledgment xv Contributors xvii

I

NEURAL CREST CELL EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. The Neural Crest, a Fourth Germ Layer of the Vertebrate Embryo: Significance in Chordate Evolution

NICOLE M. LE DOUARIN AND ELISABETH DUPIN

General Characteristics of the Neural Crest 4
Transition from Invertebrates Chordates to
Vertebrates 5

The Molecular Control of EMT Studied in NCC Development 6

Role of the NC in the Development of the Vertebrate
Head 7

The Evolutionary Origin of the Vertebrate Nervous System 9

The Genetic Identity of Vertebrate Secondary Brain Organizers as Landmarks for CNS Evolution in Deuterostomes 12

Are Precursors of the NC Present in Non-Vertebrate Chordates? 13

The Multiple Roles of the NC in the Construction of the Vertebrate Head and Brain 14

Hox Gene Expression in the Cephalic NC 15 Malformations of the Brain Induced by FSNC

Removal 17

Effect of Forced Expression of *Hox* Genes in the FSNC on Face and Brain Development 18

Role of the Cephalic NC in the Regulation of Fgf8 Production by the ANR and Isthmus 19

The Evolution of Skeletal Structures in the Vertebrate
Phylum 19
Conclusions and Perspectives 20
Abbreviations 22
Acknowledgments 22

References 22

2. Induction and Specification of Neural Crest Cells: Extracellular Signals and Transcriptional Switches

CHANG-JOON BAE AND JEAN-PIERRE SAINT-JEANNET

Introduction 27
NC Induction at the NPB 29
Timing and Tissues 30
Signaling Factors 32
Gene Regulatory Network Involved in NC
Specification 38
NPB Specifier Genes 38
NC Specifier Genes 39
Conclusions and Perspectives 41
Acknowledgments 42
References 42

3. The Cell Biology of Neural Crest Cell Delamination and EMT

LISA A. TANEYHILL AND RANGARAJAN PADMANABHAN

Introduction 51
Loss of Intercellular Adhesion 52
Adherens Junctions 52
Tight Junctions 58
Acquisition of Migratory Capacity 60
Rho GTPases and the Cytoskeleton 60
Appropriate Substrate for Migration 62
Breakdown of Basal Lamina 62
ECM 63
Integrins 64
Conclusions and Perspectives 66
References 66

4. Neural Crest Cell Migration: Guidance, Pathways, and Cell—Cell Interactions ERIC THEVENEAU AND ROBERTO MAYOR

Pathways of Neural Crest Cell Migration: An Overview 73 Cephalic Neural Crest Cell Migration 75 Inhibitors 75 Positive Regulators of Cephalic Neural Crest Cell Migration 76 Trunk Neural Crest Cell Migration 77 The Ventromedial Pathway 77 The Dorsolateral Pathway 78 Cell-Cell Interactions During Neural Crest Cell Migration 78 Neural Crest-Neural Crest Interactions and Cell Polarity 78 Neural Crest-Neural Crest Interactions Promote Collective Guidance 80 CIL-Based Dispersion Is Counterbalanced by Mutual Attraction to Promote Collective Cell Migration 80 Dialogue Between Neural Crest Cells and Their Local Environment 81 Conclusion and Perspectives 82 Acknowledgments 83 References 83

5. Epigenetic Regulation of Neural Crest Cells

PABLO H. STROBL-MAZZULLA AND MARIANNE E. BRONNER

Introduction 89
Histone Modifications 90
Methylation 92
Acetylation 93
Histone Variants 94
Chromatin Modifiers 95
DNA Methylation 96
Conclusions and Perspectives 96
Acknowledgments 97
References 97

6. Neural Crest-Mediated Tissue
Interactions During Craniofacial
Development: The Origins of
Species-Specific Pattern
JENNIFER L. FISH AND RICHARD A. SCHNEIDER

Introduction 102 From Where Does Craniofacial Pattern Come? 102 Origins and Functions of Craniofacial Tissues 102 Tissue Interactions and the Evolution of Species-Specific Pattern 105 Origins of Species-Specific Pattern 106 Comparative Early Development of Neural Crest 106 Tissue Interactions that Program the Neural Crest 107 Neural Crest and the Origins of Species-Specific Pattern 108 Mechanisms of Species-Specific Pattern in the Neural Crest-Derived Skeleton 111 Mechanisms of Species-Specific Pattern in the Craniofacial Musculature 113 Mechanisms of Species-Specific Pattern in the Craniofacial Integument 113 Conclusions and Perspectives 114

II

References 115

NEURAL CREST CELL DIFFERENTIATION AND DISEASE

7. Neural Crest Cells in Craniofacial Skeletal Development

THOMAS F. SCHILLING AND PIERRE LE PABIC

Introduction 127
Skeletogenic NC Specification and Anterior—Posterior Patterning 128
The Ectomesenchymal Lineage and its NC
Origins 128
Anterior—Posterior Identities of Cranial NCC 130
Defining the Spatial Extent of the EM and its Derivatives 130
Patterning Within Craniofacial Skeletal Primordia 131

CONTENTS vii

A GRN of D–V Pharyngeal Patterning 131
Midfacial Integration 134
Modular Patterning of Tongue and Teeth 136
Gene Regulatory Interactions in the Developing
Skull Vault 137
Translating Patterning into Growth and
Survival 138
Environmental Factors in Craniofacial
Development 140
Cranial NC Development and Evolution 141
Conclusions and Perspectives 143
References 144

8. Neural Crest Cell and Placode Interactions in Cranial PNS Development

STEPHEN J. FLEENOR AND JO BEGBIE

The Cranial Peripheral Nervous System 153
Ectodermal Placodes 155
The Pre-Placodal Region 157
Interactions 158
NCC Interactions with the Pre-Placodal Region 158
NCC Interactions with Placodal Derivatives 158
Evolutionary Significance 162
Conclusions and Perspectives 162
Acknowledgments 163
References 163

9. Neural Crest Cells in Ear Development LISA SANDELL

The Ear 167
Timing and Position of Otic NCC Emigration 169
NCC Derivatives in the Inner Ear 170
NCC in Middle Ear and Outer Ear Development 173
Neurocristopathies of the Middle and Outer Ear 176
Genetic Regulation of NCC Middle and Outer Ear
Development 177
NCC and Evolution of the Ear 178
Concluding Remarks 180
References 181

10. Neural Crest Cells in Ocular Development

SINU JASRAPURIA-AGRAWAL AND PETER Y. LWIGALE

Introduction 189
Neural Crest and Early Eye Development 191
Signaling Between NCC and the Optic Cup 192
Signaling Between NCC and the Lens 193
Signaling Between NCC and Ectoderm 194
Other Contribution of NCC to Ocular Tissues 194
Indirect Neural Crest Contribution to the Eye via
Trigeminal and Ciliary Nerves 195
Neural Crest Related Ocular Defects 196
Conclusions and Perspectives 198
References 199

11. The Cardiac Neural Crest and Their Role in Development and Disease

JOSHUA W. VINCENTZ AND ANTHONY B. FIRULLI

Introductionn 206 NCC Specification 207 Migration and Morphogenesis of the cNCC 207 Invasion of the cNCC into the Pharyngeal Arches and OFT Cushions 212 Remodeling of the Pharyngeal Arch Arteries 212 Septation of the OFT 214 Valvulogenesis in the OFT 214 NCC Differentiation 214 Evolution of Neural Crest Cell Contribution to the Heart 216 Molecular Regulators of cNCC Development and Links to Congenital Heart Disease 218 22q11 Deletion Syndrome 218 Alagille Syndrome 218 Noonan Syndrome 219 4a Deletion Syndrome 219 Dietary Factors Influencing Cardiac Neural Crest Cell Development 220 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome 220 Retinoic Acid 221 Conclusions and Perspectives 222 Acknowledgments 222 References 222

viii CONTENTS

12. Neural Crest Cells in Enteric Nervous System Development and Disease AMANDA J. BARLOW

Introduction 231 GDNF, GFR \alpha1, and RET Signaling 234 Neuturin, GFRα2, and RET Signaling 235 Endothelin 3 (EDN3)/Endothelin Receptor B (EDNRB) Signaling 235 Transcription Factors 235 KIAA1279 236 L1CAM 236 TCF4 236 Neuregulins 236 Signaling Pathway Interactions in ENS Development and HSCR 237 Genes Involved in ENS Development, not Currently Associated With Human Disease 237 Regulation of the NCC Population That Migrates Toward and Then into the Foregut 238 Regulation of ENCC Survival, Migration, Proliferation, and Differentiation Within the Gut Wall 239 ENCC Survival Within the Gut Wall 239 ENCC Migration Along the Gut Wall 240 ENCC Proliferation Within the Gut Wall 241 ENCC Differentiation Within the Gut Wall 243 HSCR and Cell Transplantation Therapies 244 HSCR: Beyond Colonic Aganglionosis 245 Conclusions and Perspectives 246 Acknowledgments 246 References 246

13. Neural Crest Cells and Peripheral Nervous System Development

ANDREW PRENDERGAST AND DAVID W. RAIBLE

Overview 256

Definition of Trunk Neural Crest 256

Divergent Neural Crest Migratory Pathways Reflect Fate Restriction of the Trunk Neural Crest 257

Neural Crest Fate Restriction Begins Long Before the Observation of Overt Differentiation Markers 258

Factors that Specify the Neural Crest Continue to Modify Neural Crest Fate Proliferation, Survival, and Fate Choice 260

The Survival and Multipotency of Trunk Neural Crest Is Maintained by Several Transcription Factors Expressed During Migration 260 Sox10 Promotes Neural Crest Survival, Supports Glial Development, and Maintains Neural Crest Multipotency 260 ErbB/Neuregulin Signaling Supports Neural Crest Migration and Glial Development 261 Neural Crest Are Instructed to Develop as Autonomic Neurons by BMP Signals Emanating from the Dorsal Aorta 264 BMPs Directly Promote Neuronal Fates 264 BMPs Trigger Changes in Trophic Factor Dependence 266 The Transcriptional Cascade Leading to Autonomic Nervous System Differentiation Is Extensively Cross-Regulatory 267 Autonomic Differentiation Begins with the Expression of Ascl1 267 Expression of the Phox2 Transcription Factors Is Essential for the Continued Development of the Sympathetic Ganglia 267 Insm1 Is Activated Downstream of Phox2b and Promotes Proliferation in Nascent Sympathetic Ganglia 268 HAND1 and 2 Mediate Specific Aspects of Noradrenergic Differentiation 268 GATA Transcription Factors Are Situated Near the End of the Sympathogenic Transcriptional Cascade 269 Lessons Learned from the Autonomic Transcription Factor Cascade 270 DRG Formation Occurs in Overlapping Waves of Neurogenesis That Can Be Followed Using the Trk Receptor Family as Markers of Cell Fate 270 DRG Neurogenesis is Traditionally Understood to Occur in Distinct Waves 270 Ablation of TrkC Signaling Causes the Loss of Large-Diameter Neurons 271 Loss of TrkB Function Causes Loss of a Subset of DRG Neurons 271

Removal of TrkA and its Ligand Cause Loss of Most

Trk Receptor Studies Are Complicated by the

Fact That Trk Receptor Expression Is Not

Small-Diameter Neurons 272

Exclusive 272

CONTENTS

The DRG Transcriptional Cascade Is Hierarchical and Sorts Cells into Subtypes 273

The Neurogenins are the Top-Tier Transcription Factors in the DRG Transcriptional Cascade 273

The Subsequent Expression of Other Transcription Factors Is Essential to DRG Development and Maintenance 274

Brn3a and Islet1 Are Initiated After the Neurog Factors and Cooperate to Regulate Many Targets 274

Runx Transcription Factors Further Refine the Dorsal Root Ganglion Sensory Neuron Population 275

Conclusions and Perspectives: Common Features in Autonomic and Sensory Neuronal Development 275

References 276

14. Neural Crest Cells and Pigmentation

ALBERTO LAPEDRIZA, KLEIO PETRATOU AND ROBERT N. KELSH

Introduction 287 Timing of Pigment Cell Development 290 Pigment Cell Progenitors 290 Fate Choice/Specification 292 Melanocytes 292 Specification of Other Pigment Cell Types 295 Commitment 296 Migration and Patterning 297 Xanthophores 298 Proliferation and Survival Differentiation 299 Morphology 299 Melanin Synthesis 300 Pigment-Type Switching 301 Iridophore Pigmentation 302 Xanthophore Pigmentation: The Pteridine Pathway 303 Conclusions and Perspectives 303 References 304

15. Neural Crest Cells in Vascular Development

SOPHIE E. WISZNIAK AND QUENTEN P. SCHWARZ

Introduction 314
Blood Vessel Development and Structure 314
The Cardiovascular System 314

Blood Vessel Development 315 Blood Vessel Maturation 315 Neural Crest Contribution to Blood Vessels 317 Neural Crest Contribution to Pharyngeal Arch Artery Development and Patterning 317 Neural Crest Cell Contribution to the Cardiac Outflow Tract 319 Neural Crest Cell Contribution to Cranial Vessel Smooth Muscle Coating 321 Innervation of the Vasculature by the ANS 324 The ANS 324 Function of Innervation in Blood Vessel Homeostasis 325 Function of Innervation in Cardiac Conduction 326 Mechanisms of Blood Vessel Innervation 327 Neural Crest Involvement in Neurovascular Patterning 329 Neurovascular Congruence 329 Blood Vessel Patterning by Peripheral Nerves 330 Conclusions and Perspectives 330 References 331

16. Neural Crest Cells and Cancer: Insights into Tumor Progression

DAVALYN R. POWELL, JENEAN H. O'BRIEN, HEIDE L. FORD AND KRISTIN BRUK ARTINGER

Introduction 335 Similarities Between Neural Crest Delamination/ Migration and Tumor Progression 336 Cell-Cell Junctions Cell Polarity 338 Rho GTPases 339 ECM, Proteases, and Integrins 340 Migration 341 Signaling and Transcription Factors 342 Neural Crest-Derived Cancers 342 Melanoma 342 Neuroblastoma 345 Glioma and Glioblastoma 346 Other Cancers of Neural Crest Origin 347 Conclusions and Perspectives 348 References 349

III

TISSUE ENGINEERING AND REPAIR

17. Neurocristopathies: The Etiology and Pathogenesis of Disorders Arising from Defects in Neural Crest Cell Development

KRISTIN E. NOACK WATT AND PAUL A. TRAINOR

Introduction 362

Neural Crest Cell Formation 362

Treacher Collins Syndrome (Mandibulofacial

Dystosis) 362

Diamond Blackfan Anemia 367

Miller Syndrome (Genee-Weidemann;

Wildervanck-Smith; Postaxial Acrofacial

Dystosis) 368

Neural Crest Cell Migration 369

Branchio-Oculo-Facial Syndrome 370

Piebaldism 371

Hirschsprung Disease 372

Mowat-Wilson Syndrome 374

Waardenburg Syndrome 374

Metastatic Cancer 376

Melanoma 377

Neuroblastoma 377

22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome 378

Neural Crest Cell Differentiation 379

Congenital Central Hypoventilation Syndrome 380

Oculocutaneous Albinism 381

Craniosynostosis 381

Conclusions and Perspectives 384

Acknowledgments 385

References 385

Human Neural Crest Cells and Stem Cell-Based Models

ERIN BETTERS, BARBARA MURDOCH, ALAN W. LEUNG AND MARTÍN I. GARCÍA-CASTRO

Introduction 395

Embryonic Development of the Human

Neural Crest 398

Neural Crest Marker Expression in Human Embryos 398

Neural Crest Markers in Human Cell Lines and Embryonic Fragments 399

Neural Crest Marker Expression: Insights into Neural Crest-Associated Human Diseases 403

Surrogate Models of Human Neural Crest

Development 403

Generating Neural Crest Precursors from Human Embryonic Stem Cells 403

hESC Derived Neural Crest Precursors as a Model for Development 404

Neural Crest Derivatives from Neural Crest Precursors 405

Transplantation of hESC Derivatives of the Neural Crest: Advances and Limitations 406

iPSC Contributions to Our Understanding of Human NC Development 406

Using Stem Cells to Model and Treat Neural

Crest-Associated Diseases 407

The Relevance of Embryonic Marker Expression Studies to hESC/iPSC-Based Research 408 Conclusions and Perspectives 409 References 409

19. Neural Crest Stem Cell: Tissue Regeneration and Repair PEDRO A. SANCHEZ-LARA AND HU ZHAO

Introduction 413
Gingival MSC 414
Dental MSC 415
PDL MSC 416
TMJ Stem Cells 417
Bone Marrow Mesenchymal Stem Cells
(BMMSCs) 417
Adipose MSC 418
Conclusions and Perspectives 418
References 419

20. Functional Significance of Cranial Neural Crest Cells During Tooth Development and Regeneration CAROLINA PARADA, YANG CHALAND PAUL SHARPE

Introduction 423 Tooth Development 424 CONTENTS xi

Origin of Tooth Cells 424
Patterning the Dentition and Instructive Signals for Patterning 425
CNCC and Dental Stem Cells 432
CNCC-Derived Stem Cells in Tooth and Alveolar Bone Regeneration 434
Conclusions and Perspectives 435
Acknowledgments 436
References 436

21. Using Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells as a Tool to Understand Neurocristopathies

JOHN AVERY, LAURA MENENDEZ, MICHAEL L. CUNNINGHAM, HAROLD N. LOVVORN III AND STEPHEN DALTON

Introduction 441
Neural Crest Cells and Neurocristopathies 442
Methods for NCC Differentiation from Pluripotent
Stem Cells 443

Neurocristopathies 445
Familial Dysautonomia 445
Hirschsprung's Disease 446
Treacher Collins Syndrome 450
CHARGE Syndrome 452
Noonan and LEOPARD Syndromes 453
22q11.2 Deletion Syndromes 453
Waardenburg Syndrome 454
Piebaldism 455
Conclusions and Perspectives 455
References 455

Index 461

PARTI

NEURAL CREST CELL EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT