



Obituary/Necrológio

Franklin A. Neva

(★ 1922 †2011)

Franklin A. Neva, 89, a renowned parasitologist, virologist and clinician who directed the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) for 26 years, died Oct. 16, 2011. Dr Neva was born on June 8th of 1922 in Cloquet, Minnesota and received his medical degree from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1946. After residency training at Boston City Hospital, a tour of duty with the U.S. Navy Army Medical Research Center in Cairo, Egypt, and research fellowships in virology, he became Assistant Professor and Instructor in Research Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He moved to Harvard School of Public Health as Associate Professor of Tropical Medicine in 1955, where he became Professor of Tropical Public Health in 1964. In 1969 he was recruited by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to become the Chief of the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases at NIAID, where he remained as lab chief and later senior scientist until his retirement in 2004.

His initial research interests, beginning in Egypt, were in urinary tract infections and typhoid fever, followed by research on viral diseases, including rubella, in which he and Thomas Weller isolated this virus. Dr. Neva was the first to describe Boston exanthem disease, an echovirus infection in children characterized by mild fever and widespread rash. His interest in parasitic infections intensified at the Harvard School of Public Health, where he explored the possibility of conducting collaborative work with scientists from Central and South America. Before moving to NIAID in 1969, he had begun to work with *T. cruzi* and this occasioned his spending six months in 1964 with his family in Salvador, Bahia, where he worked with Professor Aluizio Prata. At the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases he studied the biology of parasites as well as the human immune response to parasitic infections including leishmaniasis, Chagas' disease, malaria and strongyloidiasis. Moreover, more than 20 young Brazilian investigators were trained in the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases under his orientation or supervised by outstanding scientists he hired at NIAID, including Alan Sher, Ted Nash, Tom Nuttman and David Sacks.

Our first collaboration was in the 70's evaluating the sensitivity and specificity of a serologic test for strongyloidiasis. In the 80's Dr Neva proposed that we develop a collaboration Project on HTLV-1 and strongyloidiasis. He had been one of the first investigators to describe the increased susceptibility of people infected with HTLV-1 to develop recurrent strongyloidiasis as well as disseminated strongyloidiasis. This fruitful collaboration resulted in 13 manuscripts



about the immunological response and clinical consequences of the association between HTLV-1 and intestinal helminths, including: 1) characterizing the immune response in subjects infected with HTLV-1; 2) observing that the exaggerated type 1 immune response observed in HTLV-1 infection decreases the type 2 immune response to *Strongyloides stercoralis*; 3) demonstrating that these abnormalities were the reason for the increased susceptibility for strongyloidiasis among HTLV-1 infected subjects; 4) demonstrating that HTLV-1 decreases the efficacy of anti-parasitic drugs in patients with strongyloidiasis; 5) describing the influence of HTLV-1 in the clinical manifestations of schistosomiasis; and 6) describing the ability of helminths to modify the immunologic response in HTLV-1 infected individuals. This collaboration was also one important factor in my starting the HTLV-1 multidisciplinary clinic at the Hospital Universitário Prof. Edgard Santos that has followed more than 700 HTLV-1 infected patients.

Just as important as this excellent collaboration was the solid friendship that we built during these more than 10 years that we worked together. Dr. Neva was a kind and patient gentleman as well as a researcher who was ever passionate about improving the quality of life for patients who suffer from parasitic diseases.

Edgar Marcelino Carvalho
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