

P. O. Laboratory,
District Pretoria,
Transvaal, S.A.

6th January 1925.

Dear Professor Rio Hortega,

The subject of spontaneous encephalitis in rabbits interests me and I am trying to find answers for two questions regarding it. First, whether the disease is sharply restricted in its geographic distribution, and second, whether the causative microorganisms have invaded our laboratory animals (mice as well as rabbits) comparatively recently?

Although animals suffering from the disease often fail to exhibit any clinical symptoms, microscopic examination of their brains reveals pronounced perivascular meningeal, subependymal and focal infiltrations of mononuclear cells, frequently accompanied by necrosis. Indeed, the lesions are so very conspicuous that it is difficult to imagine why they have only so recently been described unless the disease itself is of recent origin. Particularly does this seem to me to be the case because the rabbit's brain has been so closely and repeatedly studied by neurologists.

Under these circumstances I wonder whether you would be so kind as to tell me whether you or any of your associates observed lesions of this kind before so much attention was directed to spontaneous encephalitis in rabbits, in connection with the experimental study of the virus of encephalitis lethargica?

My friend, Dr. Penfield, has written to me of your kindness in allowing him to work in your laboratory. I wish that I might myself have an opportunity to call upon you and pay my compliments on my return journey to New York, but unfortunately the time at my disposal will not permit of my doing so. I can only hope that you will soon have occasion to visit the United States and that I may then have the pleasure of meeting you.

With kind regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

E. V. Cowdry

Professor P. Del Rio Hortega,
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University of Madrid,
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