

This Week's Citation Classic

Meléndez L V, Hunt R D, Daniel M D, García F G & Fraser C E O. *Herpesvirus saimiri*. II. Experimentally induced malignant lymphoma in primates. *Lab. Anim. Care* 19:378-86. 1969. [New England Regional Primate Res. Ctr., Harvard Med. Sch. Southborough. MA]

Owl (*Aotus sp.*) and marmoset (*Saguinus sp.*) developed a fatal malignant lymphoma of the reticulum cell type 13 to 28 . days after inoculation with *Herpesvirus saimiri*, an indigenous viral agent from squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*). [The *SCI*[®] indicates that this paper has been cited over 175 times since 1969.]

Luis V. Meléndez
Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana
Oficina Regional de la
Organizacion Mundial de la Salud
Centro Panamericano de Zoonosis
1000-Buenos Aires
Argentina

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"The leukemogenic property of *Herpesvirus saimiri* was discovered when the team of workers at the Harvard Medical School Primate Research Center (R.D. Hunt, M.D. Daniel, F.G García, and C E O Fraser) led by me decided to inquire what would be the pathogenic action of an indigenous herpesvirus isolated from squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*).¹

"The remarkable result was to find out that 13 to 28 days post-inoculation the nonhuman primates

developed a fatal malignant lymphoma of the reticulum cell type or reticulum cell sarcoma. It was in this casual way that it was proved for the first time that a DNA virus can induce leukemia in primate species. *Herpesvirus saimiri* is known to be today the DNA virus with the highest leukemogenic capacity for inducing malignancy in a variety of primates of the Old and New World² as well as in rabbits.³ The malignancy was also found to be a natural disease in the natural environment of the nonhuman primates.⁴

"I think this paper has been highly cited because it deals with the first information of a herpesvirus with the capacity to induce the development of a neoplastic disease (malignant lymphoma) in nonhuman primates (New World monkeys). Besides, the malignant disease evolved in a very short period of time: less than one month. At the time that this finding was reported certainly it was a remarkable scientific discovery and today it still stands as perhaps one of the best experimental models to study induced leukemias in primates.

"I am presently director of the Pan American Zoonosis Center of the Pan American Health Organization in Buenos Aires, Argentina "

1. Meléndez L V, Daniel M D, Hunt R D & García F G. An apparently new herpesvirus from primary kidney cultures of the squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*). *Lab Anim. Care* 18:378-81.1968.
2. Meléndez L V, Hunt R D, Daniel M D, Fraser C E O, Barahona H, King W & García F G. Herpesviruses saimiri and ateles—their role in malignant lymphomas in monkeys. *Fed. Proc.* 31:1643-50.1972.
3. Daniel M D, Meléndez L V, Hunt R D, King N W & Williamson M E. Malignant lymphoma induced in rabbits by *Herpesvirus saimiri* strains. *Bacterial Proc* 1970:195. 1970.
4. Hunt R D, García F G, King N W, Fraser C E O & Meléndez L V. Spontaneous *Herpesvirus saimiri* lymphoma in owl monkeys. (Ito Y & Dutcher R M. eds.) (*Comparative leukemia research 1973—leudemogenesis*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press. 1975. p. 351-5.