Ample Monkeys and Money Nurture Robust Research [1]

Submitted on 2 August 2006 - 3:04pm

This article is reproduced by CienciaPR with permission from the original source.

Calificación:

Cited from: Science 28 July 2006: Vol. 313. no. 5786, p. 476 By Jon Cohen SAN JUAN AND CAYO SANTIAGO, PUERTO RICO--This country's close ties to the United States, combined with its large colony of rhesus macaques of Indian origin, have spawned several collaborations with leading AIDS researchers from the mainland--a rarity in much of the Caribbean. Rhesus macaques are the main model used to test AIDS vaccines, but they're in short supply. Cayo Santiago, a 15-hectare island off Puerto Rico that has been home to Indian macaques since 1938, has a surplus and must cull about 120 animals each year. Over the past 4 years, Edmundo Kraiselburd of the University of Puerto Rico estimates that UPR has shipped some 600 monkeys to various U.S. researchers, most of them studying AIDS. Some of these monkeys have also now been moved to the UPR campus, where Puerto Rican investigators, in collaboration with a group led by Thomas Folks of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, are conducting AIDS vaccine studies. Kraiselburd also heads the NeuroAIDS Program, which teams Puerto Rican clinicians and basic researchers with neuroAIDS specialists on the mainland. The project, which began in 2001 with a $6 million grant from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), has several novel studies under way. One, led by Carlos Luciano, is comparing HIV-infected children and adults to try to unravel the link between HIV and peripheral neuropathy, the most common nerve complication of AIDS. In a separate study, neurologist Valerie Wojna and immunologist Loyda Meléndez are using proteomics to investigate the causes of HIV dementia. With NIH support, Puerto Rican researchers have long participated in clinical trials of AIDS drugs. For instance, UPR's Carmen Zorrilla was a co-investigator of the landmark multisite study that in 1994 first proved that antiretroviral drugs could prevent HIV transmission from mother to infant. (UPR's medical center has had only one case of mother-to-child transmission since.) And

recently, again with NIH backing, Puerto Rico joined the HIV Vaccine Trials Network and, separately, started an HIV/AIDS research collaboration among the country's three medical schools. Zorrilla, who is helping to lead both projects, is particularly excited about bringing together young researchers from institutions that have long competed with one another. "This is a small island," says Zorrilla. "These young investigators will inherit this AIDS problem, and they need to find the solutions."

Links
[1] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/external-news/ample-monkeys-and-money-nurture-robust-research