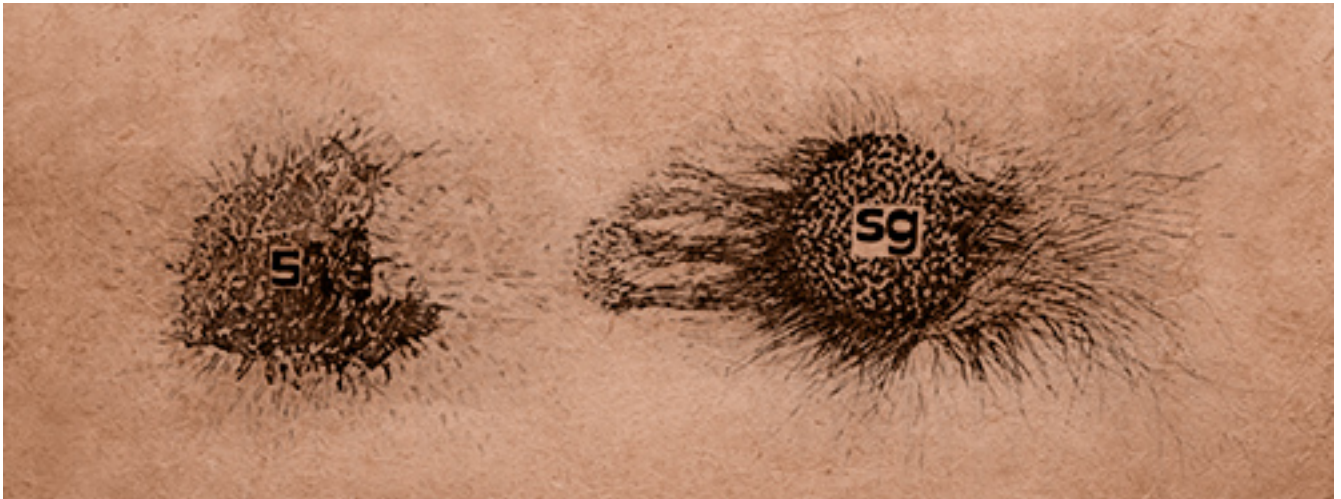




Developmental Neurobiology of Mammals



A Working Group on Study Week on the *Developmental Neurobiology of Mammals* was held in June 1985, building on the Pontifical Academy of Sciences' 50-year tradition of meetings on the neurosciences (see *Related* column on right). Participants from different countries came to present the most recent results of their studies.

This insistence on the neurosciences is understandable, because the brain defines the position of the human being in the biosphere. One of the most important goals of the neurosciences is to learn about the development of the nervous system. How does the zygote, the most complex of living systems, arise from a single cell? Which mechanisms govern the developmental events that characterize neurogenesis? What is the part played by the genome, and how does the environment influence neural development? Why are nervous systems that have reached maturity less plastic and changeable than those that are normative? Can we interfere with neural development so that pathological phenomena are avoided, or compensated?