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Recent research suggests that loss of hippocampal pyramidal cells may not occur in normal aging, forcing the question as to what *does* change in the aging hippocampus that may underlie age-related benign memory loss. In this context, it is important to note that strong evidence for an alternative to the cell-death explanation has been

known for some time. Studies involving iontophoretic application of neurotransmitters to hippocampal pyramidal cells in aging rats clearly demonstrate reduced responsiveness of these cells to two neurotransmitter agents heavily implicated in memory processes: acetylcholine (1) and met-enkephalin (2). These changes in neural responsiveness with age may be the mechanism behind the "disruption of cells' ability to communicate chemically" that "could underlie a fading memory." The death of the "cell death" hypothesis may give birth to a renewed interest in neural changes such as those that occur in the normal aging hippocampus.

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Corrections and Clarifications


The caption for the illustration accompanying the 17 May Perspective "Stratospheric control of climate" by Alan Roback (p. 972) should have begun, "Surface air temperature anomalies over North America for December 1982 through February 1983."

The ScienceScope section of the issue of 26 April (p. 473) was edited by Jocelyn Kaiser, not Richard Stone, as stated.

In the affiliation given for R. M. Zinkernagel (Letters, 3 May, p. 635), "Universität Zürich" was inadvertently omitted.

Letters to the Editor

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