SEVENTH THYROID CONFERENCE, BOSTON, 1975

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CONTENTS

Program ix

Abstracts:
SESSION 1: Feedback control of thyroid function (Abstracts 1-6) 1
SESSION 2: Thyroid stimulators (Abstracts 7-12) 4
SESSION 3: Diagnostic methods (Abstracts 13-18) 7
SESSION 4: TRH and TSH (Abstracts 19-25) 11
SESSION 5: Iodine deficiency (Abstracts 26-32) 15
SESSION 6: Thyroid cell membranes (Abstracts 33-38) 19
SESSION 7: Anatomy and morphogenesis (Abstracts 39-44) 23
SESSION 8: Autoimmunity and thyroid disease – I (Abstracts 45-51) 26
SESSION 9: Thyroid peroxidase and iodination mechanisms (Abstracts 52-58) 30
SESSION 10: Cyclic nucleotides and prostaglandins (Abstracts 59-64) 34
SESSION 11: Thyroid hormone effects (Abstracts 65-70) 38
SESSION 12: Special techniques (Abstracts 71-76) 41
SESSION 13: Regulation of thyroid protein synthesis (Abstracts 77-82) 45
SESSION 14: Thyroid hormone receptors and metabolism (Abstracts 83-88) 48
SESSION 15: Treatment of hyperthyroidism – I (Abstracts 89-93) 52
SESSION 16: Iodoproteins: biosynthesis and properties (Abstracts 94-100) 55
SESSION 17: Thyroid hormone secretion (Abstracts 101-107) 59
SESSION 18: Thyroid intermediary metabolism (Abstracts 108-112) 63
SESSION 19: Mechanisms of thyroid hormone action – I (Abstracts 113-118) 66
SESSION 20: Defective thyroid hormone synthesis (Abstracts 119-125) 70
SESSION 21: Conversion of T4 to T3 – I (Abstracts 126-131) 74
SESSION 22: Treatment of hyperthyroidism – II (Abstracts 132-136) 77
SESSION 23: Autoimmunity and thyroid disease – II (Abstracts 137-142) 80
SESSION 24: Mechanisms of thyroid hormone action – II (Abstracts 143-148) 83
SESSION 25: TBG, T4 to T3 conversion – II (Abstracts 149-154) 86
SESSION 26: Thyroid tumors: biochemical aspects (Abstracts 155–159) 90
SESSION 27: Thyroid physiopathology (Abstracts 160–164) 93
SESSION 28: Symposium: Thyroid hormone structure-activity relation (Abstracts 165–169) 96
SESSION 29: Thyroid tumors: clinical aspects (Abstracts 170–174) 99
SESSION 30: Disorders of iodine metabolism (Abstracts 175–180) 101

Author index 105
Subject index 108
SESSION 27

Thyroid physiopathology
(Abstracts 160–164)

Chairman: A. B. HAYLES, Rochester, Minn., U.S.A.
Co-chairman: B. A. LAMBERG, Helsinki, Finland

160. Recurrent goiter and amenorrhea-galactorrhea syndrome in a patient with a thyrotropin- and prolactin-producing pituitary adenoma

A 22-year-old woman presented a history of hyperthyroidism, recurrent goiter with tracheal compression and concomitant amenorrhea and galactorrhea. These symptoms originated from a TSH- and PRL-producing pituitary adenoma resulting in an enlarged sella turcica. Basal TSH-levels fluctuated between 11.9 and 29.4 μU/ml and could not be suppressed by exogenous T3 and/or T4 medication, leading to thyrotoxic hormone levels (T3: 392 ng/100 ml; T4: 17.5 μg/100 ml). The PRL-levels were 10 times above normal, between 154 and 328 ng/ml. Stimulation with TRH (200 μg i.v.) caused only an insignificant increase of TSH- and PRL-levels. In contrast to the stimulation test, suppression of TSH- and PRL-secretion occurred with the same kinetics after oral administration of 500 mg L-dopa (from 26.2 to 18.8 μU/ml TSH and from 226 to 90 ng/ml PRL) and after 5 mg 2-Br-α-ergocryptine with a nadir after 3 hr (TSH: from 11.9 to 6.4 μU/ml; PRL: from 155 to 37 ng/ml). The immediate decrease of TSH- and PRL-levels after transsphenoidal hypophysectomy combined with cryotherapy was again parallel and approached levels below normal.

Electron microscopic examination of the adenoma revealed two types of cells with distinct secretory granules. One cell type could be identified as lactotrophic. The other cells, most likely producing TSH, had long cell bodies and secretory granules with a diameter of 90–200 nm, some of them bound to the cell membrane. Both cell types were found closely associated and spread all over the adenoma.

These clinical and ultrastructural findings give for the first time strong evidence for an autonomous adenoma of the pituitary producing both TSH and PRL.