

CDB hosts practicum on brain morphogenesis

April 3, 2005 – From March 28 to April 1, the RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (Kobe, Japan) hosted the first in a planned series of lectures and practical courses with a five-day hands-on course in brain morphogenesis taught by Prof. Luis Puelles of Universidad de Murcia, Spain. The practicum, which was opened to applicants from both within and outside of the CDB, was attended by fifteen researchers interested in learning techniques for the study of comparative brain development. Lecture content ranged from the brain axis problem to an examination of brain evolution via amniote telencephalic development.



Prof. Puelles with participants in the lecture and practical course

Kumi Kuroda of the RIKEN Brain Science Institute Laboratory for Molecular Dynamics of Mental Disorders was among the participants from outside of the CDB. She reports on her experience:

“I really appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Lectures and Practical Course on Brain Morphogenesis. The five days of lectures on the development of the vertebrate central nervous system in the mornings and practical work with brain sections in the afternoons was a valuable educational experience for me.

I was a complete newcomer to brain development, but Prof. Puelles’ lectures were very easy to follow, and he always left time for questions, so I felt like I could keep up even though the content was quite advanced. By comparing the details of the molecular mechanisms at work in neural development in different vertebrates, I gained a new perspective on brain regionalization, and I was really impressed by Dr. Puelles’ success in applying this approach in demonstrating the logical relationships between structure and function in the brain.

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Dr. Puelles himself seemed very good-natured and approachable, and his emphasis on reviewing all data with an unbiased, critical eye was well taken. Discussions with other participants were also very enlightening, and I brought home a number of new insights that I hope to apply to my own work.

On the whole, I felt that the entire course was well conceived and executed and I want to thank the organizers, Drs. Aizawa and Sasai and colleagues, as well as Miki Murase in the KRPD, for all their efforts in bringing this great idea to life. I really believe that the entire Japanese life sciences community would benefit from holding more of this type of practical lecture course, and I hope that the CDB continues with its program and that other institutions follow its example."