Short Communication

TAPETUM - A MISUNDERSTOOD TOPIC

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ABSTRACT

Quite frequently students are asked to explain tapetum. We found that various books of anatomy have different explanations. Students are confused as to which book must be followed for its explanation. We are therefore writing an inference drawn by consulting books and also by observing the human brain in cadavers.

Keywords: Tapetum, Corpus Callosum, Lateral Ventricle, Posterior Horn, Inferior Horn

DEFINITION

The tapetum was described by Johann Christian Reil (1759–1813). It is formed primarily by decussating fibers in the splenium of the corpus callosum that arch over the atrium of the lateral ventricle and course inferiorly in the lateral wall of the posterior, and somewhat into the temporal horns of the lateral ventricle.[1]

WHAT DO THE BOOKS SAY ABOUT TAPETUM

1. "Those fibres of the trunk and splenium of corpus callosum which together form the roof and lateral of the posterior horn and lateral wall of the inferior horn of the lateral ventricle constitute the tapetum." [2]
2. "A large number of fibres from the trunk of corpus callosum run transversely to intersect

with the fibres of the corona radiata. Some fibres of the trunk and adjacent splenium which do not intersect with corona radiata are known as tapetum. The tapetum is closely related to the inferior horn and posterior horn of the lateral ventricle." [3]

3. "The tapetum is a thin lamina of white fibres (2cm thick) which forms the roof and lateral wall of the posterior horn and lateral wall of the inferior horn of the lateral ventricle. The tapetum is formed by those fibres of the trunk and splenium of corpus callosum which are not intersected by the fibres of corona radiata. In the coronal section, the tapetum looks whiter than the surrounding white matter because section passes parallel to the fibres of the tapetum." [4]
4. "Some of the fibres of the corpus callosum form the roof and lateral wall of the posterior

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horn of the lateral ventricle and the lateral wall of the inferior horn of the lateral ventricle; these fibres are referred to as tapetum.” [5]

5. “The roof and lateral wall is formed by the tapetum of the corpus callosum, with the optic radiation lying against the tapetum in the lateral wall.” [6]

CONCLUSION

Tapetum literally means a reflective layer. In the human brain tapetum consists of those fibres of splenium of corpus callosum which form the roof, lateral and inferior wall of the posterior horn and lateral wall of the inferior horn of the lateral ventricle. They look whiter than the white matter because they are cut parallel to the fibres it contains [7].

In many animals, it is a reflective layer of the choroid of the eye causing them to shine in the dark.

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