



## Neural Crest Development in Health and Disease

Guest Editor:

**Prof. Dr. Nicolas Pilon**

Département des sciences  
biologiques, Université du  
Québec à Montréal, Montreal, QC  
H3C 3J7, Canada

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### Message from the Guest Editor

There are several reasons why so many researchers remain fascinated by neural crest cells more than a century after their first description. One reason is the central role these vertebrate-specific cells played during evolution. A second is the unique ability of these cells to migrate over very long distances during a relatively short time window. A third reason is the multipotency of these cells, which is so extensive that the neural crest is even considered a germ layer on its own, just like the ectoderm, mesoderm, and endoderm. Neural crest cells not only contribute a wide array of specialized cell types, but can also indirectly affect tissue morphogenesis by influencing the behavior and/or function of adjacent non-neural crest cells. A fourth reason is the apparent propensity of some neural crest cells to persist as tissue-resident stem cells in many adult tissues. A fifth reason is their involvement in a large number of human diseases, collectively referred to as neurocristopathies, an expanding research field that now benefits from decades of fundamental research on neural crest development.





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### Prof. Dr. José L. Quiles

Department of Physiology,  
Institute of Nutrition and Food  
Technology “Jose Mataix”,  
Biomedical Research Center,  
University of Granada, Avda.  
Conocimiento s/n, 18100 Armilla,  
Granada, Spain

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*International Journal of Molecular  
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MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5  
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