

SHORT COMMUNICATION

“UNINVITED GUESTS” OF THE BRAIN IN A 19TH-CENTURY MUSEUMROSA GOUVEIA^{1,2,3}, M. JOÃO AGUIAR², TERESA FERREIRA², LINA CARVALHO^{2,4}¹Forensic Pathology, Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal e Ciências Forenses, Coimbra, Portugal²Faculty of Medicine, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal³CHLO, Lisboa, Portugal⁴CHUC, Coimbra, Portugal

Infectious diseases of the central nervous system (CNS) remain an important cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide [1]. They vary according to region and population characteristics. Yet, despite health care improvements, they often are under or misdiagnosed. One measure to ameliorate diagnosis may be to sensitize young medical

generations to the problem, namely by promoting the observation and study of affected CNS specimens during the under and postgraduate medical curriculum. Since in most countries autopsy rate has decreased, Anatomopathological Museums may be an alternative resource [2]. At the Faculty of Medicine of Coimbra's University (FMUC), the Anatomopathological Museum – founded in 1822 – contains 22 liquid-preserved brain specimens displaying infectious lesions due to bacteria (*Meningococcus* spp, *Streptococcus pneumonia*, *Treponema pallidum*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*). The authors show one of the specimens with a tuberculoma (Fig. 1A, B). In fact, tuberculosis remains a Public Health issue throughout the world and not only neurotuberculosis ranges 1% of active tuberculosis [3], but also tuberculomas present as a differential diagnosis among CNS space-occupying lesions.

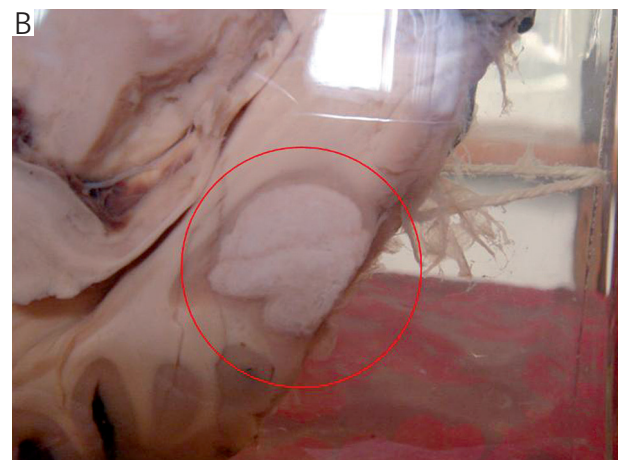
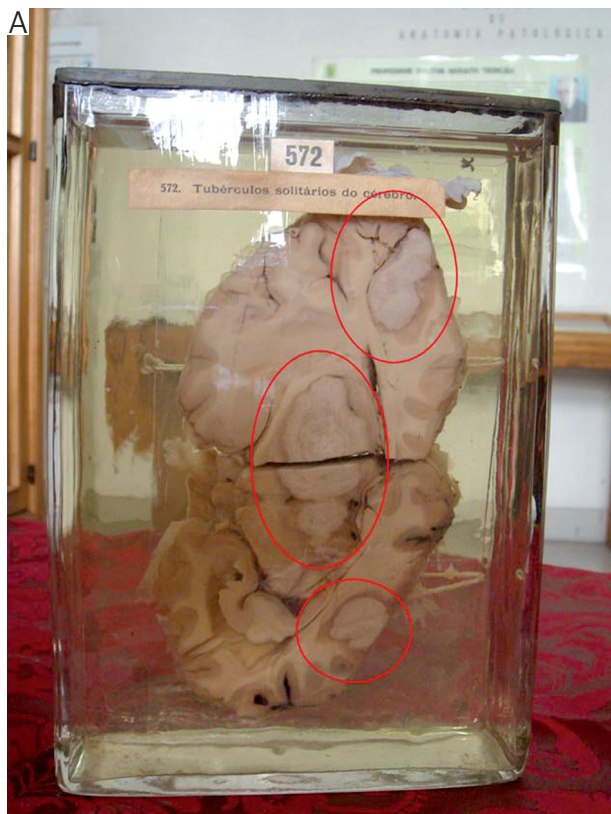


Fig. 1A, B. Macroscopic views of a brain specimen from IAP – FMUC's Anatomopathological Museum, with a close-up of the tuberculoma on the B (source: IAP – FMUC)

To conclude, we highlight the relevance of Anatomopathological Museums as a medical – namely neuropathological – teaching tool.

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