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A descriptive study on structure and features of Chordates

Prashant Kumar
M.Phil, Roll No: 150649
Session: 2015-16
University Department of Zoology
B.R.A Bihar University, Muzzaffarpur

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Abstract

An knowledge of ecosystem structure and function is necessary for successful management of our natural resources; in other words, an ecosystem-based management strategy. Even though they are cryptic, parasites can be found in practically all habitats, yet research on populations and communities of species often ignore them. Parasites may significantly or subtly alter the behaviour, growth, fertility, and mortality of their hosts. Parasites may also control host population dynamics and have an impact on community structure. Many parasites have intricate life cycles and rely on a number of intermediary vertebrate and invertebrate hosts for transmission. Predator-prey interactions often play a role in transmission. Therefore, parasites are an indication of changes in ecosystem structure and function and reflect the host's place in the food chain. The population structure, evolutionary theories, environmental stresses, trophic relationships, biodiversity, and climatic conditions may all be learned from parasites. In order to optimise the information acquired for ecosystem-based studies and resource management, I provide examples from a variety of freshwater and marine systems to show that parasites should be included in research and monitoring programmes.

Keywords: parasitism, stress, parasite-induced host mortality,

Introduction

Scientists have been puzzled and interested by the origins of chordates for about 200 years. However, current investigations into this difficult issue that combine developmental biology and evolutionary perspectives are starting to make progress in comprehending the evolution of these unusual species. Traditionally, a few established model species and a few new model systems have been used to study developmental biology. Different models' knowledge extraction improves at varying speeds, some quickly and others more slowly. As a result, information from the more abundant species has had a significant impact on the creation of developmental syntheses. These syntheses, however, are always mosaics of knowledge pieces amassed in many creatures and so only approximate the ultimate objective of completely comprehending development in a particular species. The fact that signalling molecules and transcription factors, which are as widely separated

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by evolution as insects and vertebrates are, have been identified as key players in the development of animals is evidence that all animal developmental processes can be understood on the same mechanistic foundations. Research on the molecular basis of typical aspects of animal development has been sparked in the past 20 years by the huge success in cloning and analysing expression patterns for homologs of important genes producing these molecules in model species. However, there were periods when the similarities between creatures were often overstated in comparison to the facts, which led to a resurgence of interest in the developmental causes of animal variety. The decoding of the genomes of creatures that hold significant places in the evolutionary tree and of species that are closely linked to the traditional model systems has recently fueled interest in the intricacies of animal development. Even while animals use fundamentally the same developmental building blocks, the comparative study of development on these two complementary fronts is starting to provide light on why they may be so diverse from one another. These observations suggest that whereas animals often construct similar structures using slightly varied combinations of the same essential components, sometimes they may also construct homologous structures utilising radically different molecules. In general, it is clear that fresh developmental synthesises are being created, bringing together research interests in related and dissimilar areas of animal development. According to this theory, it is essential to study developmental similarities in order to comprehend ontogeny at the level of a single organism and, at the same time, to provide a background for identifying the precise mechanisms that gave rise to the astounding diversity of life forms that we find in nature. But ultimately, only when carried out within an evolutionary framework can comparative evaluations of development make sense. It is hard to determine whether certain remarkable similarities come from shared ancestry or were developed separately without an evolutionary context. The resurgence of interest in comparative aspects of development revealed that some morphological similarities that were previously interpreted as homologies based on shared genetic circuits are sometimes best understood as parallelisms or convergences, instead of homologies, emphasising how flexible the relationship between genomes and phenotypes is. As a result, understanding evolution is more important for comprehending development.

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Any animal that belongs to the phylum Chordata, which also contains the most highly developed creatures, the vertebrates (subphylum Vertebrata), as well as the tunicates (subphylum Tunicata) and cephalochordates, is referred to as a chordate (subphylum Cephalochordata). Some classifications pair the chordates with the phylum Hemichordata.

At some time in its life cycle, a chordate possesses a powerful, dorsal supporting rod, as the name indicates (the notochord). Additional features of chordates include gill apertures that open from the neck to the exterior, a tail that extends behind and above the anus, a hollow nerve cord above (or dorsal to), and an endostyle (a mucus-secreting structure) or its derivative between the gill slits. (A distinctive characteristic might only exist in a growing embryo and disappear as the embryo transforms into an adult form.) The body arrangement of the closely related phylum Hemichordata is very similar.

General features

Small creatures known as tunicates range in size from one to five centimetres (0.4 to 2.0 inches), with a minimum length of about one millimetre (0.04 inch) and a maximum length of slightly more than 20 centimetres. Colonies have been known to reach lengths of up to 18 metres (59 feet). The size range of cephalochordates is one to three centimetres. Vertebrates come in a variety of sizes, from microscopic fish to whales, which are among the biggest creatures that have ever lived. Tunicates are marine invertebrates that often establish colonies via asexual reproduction. They may be benthic (bottom dwellers) or pelagic (habitants of open water). They consume food by ingesting water via their mouths, and they use their gill slits as a kind of filter. Similar mechanisms govern eating in cephalochordates. They can swim quickly by undulating their bodies since they have a well-developed muscular system. Typically, cephalochordates reside in maritime sand and gravel, partly hidden.

Reproduction and life cycle

Fertilization marks the beginning of the chordate life cycle (the union of sperm and egg). In its most basic form, fertilization takes place outside, in the water. In certain vertebrates, including

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tunicates, asexual reproduction occurs (females of some fish and lizards can reproduce without fertilization). Other than tunicates and a few fish, which have both male and female reproductive organs, there is no difference between the sexes. When they do exist, larvae (very early forms that vary greatly from juveniles and adults) have a different anatomy from the larvae of no chordates. Tunicates and vertebrates often exhibit internal fertilization, viviparity (the ability to give birth to offspring that have completed embryological development), and parental care.

Ecology and habitats

All significant environments include a lot of chordates. Tunicate larvae either look for a location to attach to and change into adults or grow into adults that float in the open water. While developing in the open ocean, cephalochordates eventually become fully or partly buried in sand and gravel as adults. They are filter feeders with straightforward behaviour in any situation. Vertebrates have a significantly more complicated ecosystem and a wide range of behavioural patterns in line with their more active mode of food acquisition.

Locomotion

Chordates can move around at some point in their lives by using their muscles. This is done via the action of a tail in tunicate larvae, body undulations in cephalochordates, general body motions in vertebrates (such in eels and snakes), and the action of fins and limbs, which are transformed into wings in birds and certain mammals.

Associations

In addition to engaging in a broad range of symbiotic partnerships, chordates are notable parasite hosts. In both a broad and specific sense, family groupings and social interactions are exceptionally highly developed in vertebrates, partly because of their complex neurological systems. This phenomenon is seen in groups of animals such as herds of mammals, flocks of birds, and schools of fish, as well as in groups of primates that may represent the first stages of human civilization.

Conclusion

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In conclusion, parasites are common in aquatic environments. They may have effects that are delicate, sublethal, or even fatal. Their effects on hosts spread up and down food webs, having an effect on whole populations. They are impacted by biotic and abiotic environmental changes much as free-living creatures are. Since parasites are excellent indicators of a variety of biological features of their hosts, they are very helpful as management and conservation tools. They are also uniquely positioned within food webs, and their transmission mechanisms may allow for their use as markers of biodiversity, food-web structure, and environmental stress. In fact, parasites are far from being unimportant background performers in the ecological theatre; rather, they play vital roles that call for them to stand up and be recognised as the ecosystem stage's curtain call. The importance of their amazingly complex roles, which are delicately woven into the scripts of almost all the major actors in the drama of life, must be acknowledged by critics.

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