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Fig. 1. Immunofluorescence staining of thymic cells in the subcapsular cortex (a, b) and the medulla (c, d) with monoclonal A2B5 and anti-NP serum. Reticular networks, which might correspond to TNCs in situ, are delineated by A2B5 and NP immunoreactivities in the subcapsular cortex (a, b, arrows). One A2B5-positive cell is also identified in the outer cortex (a, asterisk). Double immunofluorescence analysis reveals a close correspondence between A2B5-positive and ir NP-containing cells in the medulla (c, d). Note the absence of staining in the deep cortex, partially seen in the upper left corner (c, d). 5-µm cryostat sections. × 400.

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Plate II

Fig. 2. The neuroendocrine TNCs.
Sequential double immunofluorescence stainings of isolated TNCs with monoclonal A2B5 (a, c) and polyclonal antisera against NP (b) and OT (d). The TNC-engulfed thymocytes are not labelled and appear as round shaded areas dispersed in the cytoplasm of TNCs. A2B5 mainly delineates the TNC outer and intercaveolar membrane, while NP and OT immuno-reactivities are more diffuse in TNC cytoplasm. Double exposure photograph of a group of TNCs immunostained with A2B5 and anti-AVP (e). Reactivity of one TNC with anti-NSE serum (f). 5-µm cryostat sections, a-d × 2,000; e, f × 1,000.

Fig. 3. Control experiments: absence of specific immunostaining of TNCs with normal rabbit serum as first-step antibody (a), and after preincubation of anti-OT with 5 × 10^{-6} M synthetic OT (b). Extinction of specific immunolabelling was also observed with normal mouse serum as first antibody, with anti-AVP preincubated with 5 × 10^{-6} M synthetic AVP, or with TRITC-conjugated second antibody. Note the need for an increase of the photographic exposure time as indicated by a clearer background. 5-µm cryostat sections, a × 400; b × 2,000.

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