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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Vladimir Mikhailovich Bechterev (1857–1927)

Bechterev studied brain stem anatomy (1894) and later as a contemporary of Pavlov contributed to “psychoreflexology” (1900). He achieved a place in Russian neurology nearly equivalent to Pavlov. Bechterev (1885, 1887) added to Dieter’s work by distinguishing between the anterior and posterior roots of the eighth nerve. He called the first the *ramus vestibularis* and the second *ramus cochlearis*. He associated the vestibular root with Dieter’s nucleus. His work led to a better understanding of some components of the eighth nerve that had acoustic functions. In 1894 he also described the nuclear complexes of the reticular formation, connections of the inferior olive, components of the cerebellar peduncles, the central tegmental tract, and the superior vestibular nucleus (nucleus of Bechterev). Bechterev also described the spinothalamic tract (1904) as the pain pathway and contributed to the motor and sensory functions of the brain and the theory of cerebral localisation. In 1909 Bechterev reported that unilateral removal of the inferior colliculus led to transient diminution of reflex movements of the ear contralateral to sounds.

The first association of memory with a specific part of the limbic system seems to have been made by Bechterev. He described in 1900 the brain of a patient with memory deficit and hippocampal degeneration. Bechterev also described ankylosing spondylitis, known for a time as Bechterev’s disease.

In 1952 Russia issued a postage stamp commemorating the 25th anniversary of his death. (Stanley Gibbons 1790, Scott 1655)

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