

SPACE MEDICINE BRANCH REPORT

Send information for publication on this page to: **Melchor J. Antunano, M.D., M.S.**
3309 Crosstimber Drive
Edmond, OK 73034
(405) 954-6206
melchor_j_antunano@mmacmail.jccbi.gov

The Microgravity Laboratory/IPCT-PUCRS The First Brazilian Space Life Sciences Center

Prof. Thais Russomano, MD, Ph.D.
Head, Microgravity Laboratory IPCT-PUCRS

The recent engagement of Brazil in the construction and utilization of the International Space Station has motivated several Brazilian research institutions and universities, including the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), to establish study centers related to Space Sciences.

PUCRS is now the leading Brazilian University in the area of aeronautics and astronautics. It started, in 1993, the first training courses for pilots in Brazil (the School of Aeronautical Sciences), becoming the pioneer University to graduate Civil Aviation Pilots with a university degree in South America. The decision to build the first Brazilian laboratory dedicated to conducting experiments in microgravity and ground-based microgravity simulation was a step further.

Established in 1998, it is located in the "Instituto de Pesquisas Cientificas e Tecnologicas (IPCT)", and it is the result of a joint effort of the School of Medicine, School of Aeronautical Sciences and School of Electrical Engineering/Biomedical Engineering at PUCRS.

The principal activities of the Microgravity Laboratory at the IPCT (PUCRS) are the development of research projects related to human physiology before, during, and after ground-based microgravity simulation and parabolic flights, to aviation medicine in the XXI century and to aerospace biomedical engineering.

To be considered for the Microgravity Laboratory, the research projects—including studies in aerospace physiology, aerospace medicine, aerospace pharmacology and aerospace biomedical engineering—should conform to the following:

1. Be of relatively short duration, 1 to 6 months, since studies which last much longer tend to impair the development of a new center;
2. Be of relatively low cost, in order to avoid financial considerations limiting research activity;
3. Motivate researchers, teachers and students to:
 - (a) participate in the development of protocols, experimental techniques, and the collection and analysis of the data;
 - (b) present results of studies at national and international scientific meetings;
 - (c) publish high quality research papers in scientific journals.
4. Act as a link between Brazil and universities and institutions in other countries by the exchange of investigators, students, equipment and joint funding of collaborative projects;
5. Contribute to Space Life Sciences with clear scientific, technological, social and economic benefits for society.

In the last 2 years, the Microgravity Laboratory has promoted joint research projects with the Department of Aerospace Medicine at King's College London (England, UK), the Institute of Aerospace Medicine at the German Space Agency (DLR, Cologne, Germany), the Greek Aerospace Medical Association (Greece), the European Space Agency (Parabolic Flight Campaign), and several Brazilian aerospace research institutions.

In 2001, the Microgravity Laboratory established a student exchange program with two NASA centers (Ames Research Center, CA, and Johnson Space Center, TX) and with the German Space Agency.

For more information, please, visit the MicroG lab homepage at: www.ipct.pucrs.br/microg; e-mail: trussomano@hotmail.com

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Nominations Sought for 2003 AsMA Awards

December 15 is the deadline for receiving nominations for the special annual awards to be presented at the 2003 Annual Scientific Meeting in San Antonio, TX.

The Chair of the Awards Committee would like to emphasize that the names of prospective award winners should be submitted as far in advance of the deadline as possible so the committee has time to review all of the names and select the recipients.

Nominations can be made by any member of AsMA or previous award winner.

The nominations must be submitted on forms available from the AsMA Home Office, and printed in the journal. Mail forms to:

Chair, Awards Committee
Aerospace Medical Association
320 South Henry Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3579

The Awards are as follows (full descriptions appear on the form):

1. Louis H. Bauer Founders Award
2. Mary T. Klinker Award
3. Harry G. Mosely Award
4. Eric Liljencrantz Award
5. Theodore C. Lyster Award
6. Boothby-Edwards Award
7. Julian E. Ward Award
8. Raymond F. Longacre Award
9. Arnold D. Tuttle Award
10. John A. Tamisiea Award
11. Sidney D. Leverett, Jr., Environmental Science Award
12. John Paul Stapp Award
13. Kent K. Gillingham Award
14. Won Chuel Kay Award