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Biocomplexity Faculty Search  
c/o C. Howard  
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Search committee:

It is a pleasure for me to support Dr. Robert Sachdev's application. I have known Robert for many years, probably longer than most other reviewers. Robert started working with me while he was an undergraduate at the University of Michigan. As a result of an emergent interest in neuroscience, he enrolled in the Neuroscience Program at the University of Michigan to do his doctoral research. I became his thesis advisor and I was certainly very pleased to have him in my lab. I have maintained close contact with Robert over the years and watched his scientific development with delight.

Robert demonstrated a strong and serious commitment to research from the outset. He carried a full load of courses as an undergraduate and at the same time worked with me on primate recording studies. Later, he conducted his own research projects. Through his own hard work he trained himself to a level of expertise in neuroscience superior to most graduate students even before he finished his undergraduate degree. For his graduate work, he studied neuronal coding in the globus pallidus and entopeduncular nucleus of cats. His contributions were instrumental in developing the cat model in our research programs. His particular aim was to determine the neurophysiological consequences of striatal lesions on the activity of single neurons. It was a difficult experiment dependent on long-term recordings in conscious animal subjects. The project demanded careful management of time, resources and details of animal behaviour. Robert took charge of all phases of the research including experimental design, implementation, data collection, data analysis and publication. He was careful and conducted his experiments with great skill. His results defied the simplistic model of predicted rate changes in deafferented neurons showing instead an original and interesting change in the pattern of cell activity. These important findings led to new thinking about the effects of deafferentation on central structures. Robert was thoughtful and humane in the care of animals. He worked independently and yet he had a remarkable ability to enlist the support of his peers and other faculty members.

Robert pursues all of his objectives relentlessly including a side trip to obtain a degree in fine arts to satisfy a life-long goal. His outstanding postdoctoral research record testifies to his excellent research capabilities. Robert is one of the few individuals that I know who is able to do extracellular recordings from behaving cats or rats and can conduct experiments on the significant consequences for neuronal coding imparted by the unique properties of cells at the membrane and synaptic levels. It would be difficult to find a neurophysiologist with more experience and capability.

Robert Sachdev is intelligent and creative. He has the ability to work hard and he is motivated to succeed. He is constantly engaged in the ongoing enterprise of science with his colleagues and acquaintances. He is naturally gifted and he uses his gifts to commendable goals. He is a pleasant and friendly person who gets along well with his colleagues. I believe that Robert is an outstanding choice for your group. Feel free to contact me if you need more information.

Yours truly,

J. Wayne Aldridge, PhD  
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