Introduction

As part of the 25th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Blood Purification, the Czech Society of Nephrology has organized the satellite symposium 'Biosimilars in Nephrology'.

As the topic of biosimilars is both current and interesting for nephrologists too, we decided to prepare a supplement to *Kidney and Blood Pressure Research* dedicated to this important issue which we called 'Opportunities and Challenges with Biosimilars'.

The supplement content is based upon the lectures presented at this symposium by Wurm, Schellekens and Rossert and supplemented by papers by Tesař, Rychlik, and Mikhail covering the clinically most relevant aspects of this topic.

The first paper by Tesař and Rychlik refers to the differences in the economic situation and renal health care across both 'old' and 'new' member states of the European Union, and the potential impact of these differences in attitudes towards the use of biosimilars.

In his paper, Wurm focused on the complexity of the biopharmaceutical production process, concluding that biopharmaceuticals (including biosimilars) produced by different pharmaceutical companies cannot be considered identical and their safety must therefore be assessed accordingly.

Schellekens elaborates further on the risk of the unexpected immunogenicity caused by apparently insignificant differences in the manufacturing process, drawing lessons derived from the well-known story of Eprex®-associated pure red cell anemia.

Rossert addresses the challenges raised by the introduction of biosimilars, as acknowledged by the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, and updates the audience on the current legal status and resulting clinical implications.

Finally, the paper by Mikhail provides an overview of the various problems described by the previous authors, with particular emphasis on the impact in clinical practice.

We hope that this review will provide support to those physicians who will be confronted by the decision to use biosimilars.

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