Preface

The Korea-Japan Liver Symposium (KJLS) has been held every year since 2004. Since then, the Symposium has covered a variety of subjects including human hepatocarcinogenesis (2004), non-A, non-B and non-C liver diseases (2005), and liver transplantation for virus-related liver diseases (2006). Korean scientists got together again in 2007 with internationally renowned Japanese scientists in the field of hepatology. In this Symposium, we exchanged ideas and the latest achievements, and discussed the issues pertaining to 'New Diagnostic Tools of Virus (HBV and HCV)-Related Liver Diseases.'

We herein present the subjects dealt with in the 4th Korea-Japan Liver Symposium held in Seoul, on September 8, 2007. In this supplement, we discuss the most important advances in the diagnosis of patients with chronic liver disease including hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). The structure of the Symposium included five sessions:

Session 1 Techniques for the Early Detection of Drug Resistance;

Session 2 Noninvasive Diagnostic Tests for Hepatic Fibrosis;

Session 3 Early Detection of HCC Using Tumor Markers;

Session 4 Diagnostic Accuracy of Imaging in the Detection of HCC and

Session 5 Treatment of Chronic Hepatitis C and New Prognostic Staging System for Hepatocellular Carcinoma.

Two or more topics were dealt with in each session, one by Korean and the others by Japanese scientists. The proceedings followed closely the structure of the Symposium. In the first session, two advanced techniques for the early detection of drug-resistant HBV during antiviral therapy were presented: (1) a chemiluminescence enzyme immunoassay for the detection of hepatitis B virus core-related antigen which was described as a method for identifying patients who were at low risk of lamivudine resistance, and (2) the early detection method of antiviral-resistant mutants including a matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization time-of-flight mass spectrometry-based genotyping assay of YMDD variants. Advantages and disadvantages were discussed. In the second session, the diagnostic accuracy of several noninvasive diagnostic tests for hepatic fibrosis [transient elastography (Fibroscan®), real-time tissue elastography and serum fibrotic markers] was compared, and their limitation and clinical implications were discussed. In the third session, proteins (heat shock protein 70, cyclase-associated protein 2 and human cervical cancer oncogene), which are abundantly upregulated in a stepwise manner in multistage hepatocarcinogenesis, and, therefore, could be a sensitive marker for the differential diagnosis of early HCC, were described. In the fourth session, the accuracy of multidetector row CT by viewing images on a digital monitor was compared with that of double-contrast liver MRI for preoperative evaluation of the patients with HCC who were suitable for liver transplantation. The diagnostic usefulness of contrast-enhanced harmonic ultraso-

nography (US) with Sonazoid, a second-generation US contrast agent, in the differential diagnosis of liver tumors was compared to dynamic CT. In the fifth session, the clinical usefulness of a new immunoradiometric assay of hepatitis C virus core antigen and the interrelation between elevated serum ALT levels and hepatic iron overload in patients with chronic hepatitis C were presented, followed by the final presentation on the biomarker combined Japan integrated staging score, a new prognostic staging system for hepatocellular carcinoma.

Active participation from both sides of Korea and Japan made the 4th KJLS in Seoul a great success, not only in terms of scientific achievement but also in terms of

enhancing cooperation and friendship between Korean and Japanese scientists. The success of the past four symposia has encouraged us to continue organizing it every year in the future.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the Clinical Research Center for Solid Tumors of Korea and the Bukwang Pharmaceutical Company for their sponsorship. In addition, we are most grateful to S. Karger AG, who made the publication of this supplement of *Intervirology* and the timely production of this volume possible.

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