Introduction

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This issue of *Hormone Research* contains the Proceedings of the XIVth International Symposium on Endocrinology and Development (ISED), held in Palma de Ma-llorca, Spain, on November 23-25, 1995.

The aim of this Symposium series has been to provide a yearly update of basic and clinical endocrine research for paediatric endocrinologists. The meeting in Palma provided valid examples of how molecular biology can (and should) be linked to clinical studies in modern endocrine research. A fascinating introduction to this paradigm was given by Prof. Lamberts in his lecture on 'gluco-corticoid insensitivity syndrome', which demonstrated how a biochemical abnormality characterized by molecular biology can be validated in extensive clinical and epi-demiological studies.

The plenary lecture on the use of transgenic animals for understanding the physiology of insulin-like growth factors (IGFs) and IGF-binding proteins (IGFBPs), as well as the following symposium on the molecular and cell biology of the hypothalamopituitary system and its clinical implications, provided an almost state-of-the-art summary of our current understanding of the physiology and physiopathology of growth hormone-IGFs-IGFBPs. In this area, the progress brought about by molecular biology will allow us to identify and describe the molecular abnormalities that may cause the clinical syndrome of 'idio-pathic' growth hormone deficiency (GHD).

The second symposium was devoted to insulin-dependent type I diabetes, as in previous ISED programmes. The session highlighted the contribution of molecular biology to the management of the disease, which has made possible the development of new strategies for the recognition and prevention of type I diabetes.

The experience of treating adult GHD patients with human growth hormone (hGH) has very significantly increased our understanding of the mode of action of growth hormone, particularly with respect to the anabolic and metabolic effects. Of particular interest is the effect of hGH on bone biology and muscle function. These aspects have been thoroughly investigated in long-term studies in adult GHD subjects. However, they are also of importance in the developing GHD child and the final session of the meeting reviewed our current knowledge in this area.

We are grateful to all the speakers and chairmen for their contributions, and for assisting in the rapid publication of this supplement by providing their manuscripts in a very short time.