Preface

The development of retinoids and their clinical application has revolutionized therapeutic management in the field of dermatology.

The different developmental phases of experimental and clinical retinoid research are reflected in the various symposia held in connection with the 15th World Congress of Dermatology in Mexico, 1977, the 16th World Congress of Dermatology in Tokyo, 1982, and the three International Retinoid Symposia in Berlin, 1980, London, 1983, and Geneva, 1984.

While in 1977 the two hitherto most important representatives of the oral retinoids, isotretinoin and etretinate, were still being discussed as a new therapeutic concept, it is clearly apparent that now, 10 years later, they have become a well-established part of the dermatological formulary. In addition to the classical indications, such as psoriasis, various genodermatoses, and severe acne, newer indications have emerged: (1) autoimmune-induced dermatoses such as cutaneous lupus erythematosus, lichen pla-nus, and several bullous dermatoses, and (2) in the field of dermatological oncology, lymphomas and epithelial tumors. These new indications were stimulated in part by the enormous accumulation of recent experimental in vitro and in vivo results on the mechanisms of action of the retinoids.

However, despite recent advances, serious side effects such as teratogenicity, bone toxicity, and lipid metabolism disorders render it necessary to continue the search for safer and more effective retinoids. The first steps taken in this direction have been the development of the polyaromatic retinoids of the 3rd generation, the arotinoids.

The scientific program of the 17th World Congress of Dermatology, May 24-29th, 1987 in Berlin, enabled us to reflect the current status of this development in two topically complementary symposia: one Satellite Symposium covering the basic research on retinoids and a CMD Symposium focussing on the clinical usage of these drugs.

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