Preface

The Dr. Falk Pharma GmbH celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010 and we are very happy to contribute with our workshop *Liver and Pancreatic Diseases: Consequences of Chronic Alcoholic Consumption* to the success of the IV Falk Gastro-Conference. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Falk family, especially Mrs. Ursula Falk for having generously supported science in the fields of hepatology and gastroenterology for half a century.

Alcohol-related disorders account for an enormous part of global mortality and for an even greater part of the life years lost by disabilities due to alcohol consumption. In Europe and the USA, more than 20% of men and approximately 9% of women hospitalized in varying medical departments in general hospitals feature alcohol-related disorders. Alcoholic liver disease in particular continues to be a major health problem with respect to both morbidity and mortality.

To enhance the understanding of the molecular mechanisms of alcoholic liver and pancreatic injury, a group of international basic and clinical researchers first met in Marina del Rey, California, USA, in 2006, and in the following years in Kobe, Japan, 2007, Bilbao, Spain, 2008, and Hurgada, Egypt, 2009. The Falk workshop held on October 5 & 6, 2010 in Freiburg/Germany, was the successive meeting of these international symposia on alcoholic liver and pancreatic diseases and cirrhosis.

The workshop started with two extraordinary opening lectures on the evolutionary origin of alcohol consumption and on the understanding of alcohol-dependent liver diseases by means of system biology. In five sessions the latest results of clinical and basic research on the pathomechanisms of alcohol-induced damage of the liver and pancreas have been presented. In addition, the role of alcohol drinking-associated factors in the development of these diseases has been discussed. Further special lectures dealt with new advances in the pathophysiology of pancreatitis and with animal models to help unravel the pathways involved in alcohol-induced damage.

We thank the speakers and authors for their contributions to this current publication of Karger and hope that its readers will learn something about the frontiers and future perspectives of treatment of both hepatic and pancreatic diseases.

Manfred V. Singer, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Sam Zakhari, NIAAA, Bethesda, USA

Craig McClain, University of Louisville, USA

Steven Dooley, University of Heidelberg, Germany