Preface

This publication contains the contributions by the speakers at the 21st International Bile Acid Meeting held in Freiburg, Germany, October 7–14, 2010. As in previous Bile Acid Meetings, this Symposium attracted a large number of basic scientists and clinical hepatologists from all over the world. The International Bile Acid Meetings have been held biannually since 1970, when Herbert Falk and the Falk Foundation started to sponsor these conferences, thereby contributing successfully to the bridging of basic science and clinical hepatology and other disciplines of medicine in the field of bile acids. Herbert Falk died on August 8, 2008. In memory of his generous personality and his unique way of supporting hepatology and gastroenterology, the first Herbert Falk Lecture was given by Alan Hofmann from San Diego who was the first recipient of the Herbert Falk medal.

The scientific organizers and editors of this publication have assembled the contributions reflecting the recent progress in bile acid transport and metabolism as well as the role of bile acids as signal molecules and metabolic integrators. Also the clinical relevance of genetic variants of protein structures involved in bile acid metabolism, transport and signalling as well as new aspects on the pathogenesis of cholestatic liver diseases, such as primary sclerosing cholangitis, primary biliary cirrhosis and cholestatic itch, were addressed. Furthermore, the current status of bile acids as therapeutics was highlighted in a variety of contributions.

One highlight of the 21st International Bile Acid Meeting was the presentation of the Adolf Windaus Prize, sponsored by the Falk Foundation to Kristina Schoonjans and Johan Auwerx from Lausanne for their important work on bile acid signalling and control of metabolism.

The scientific organizers and editors are grateful to Ursula Falk, the chairwoman of the Falk Foundation, for her generous sponsorship of the 21st International Bile Acid Meeting, to Silvia Maresch for her perfect organizational support and to Karger Publishers for their excellent cooperation in publishing these proceedings. Last but not least, the editors thank all contributors to this publication for their input into this up-to-date overview of basic and clinical bile acid research.

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