Preface

The title of the 26th Workshop on Surfactant Replacement is a reflection of both a broadening of the geographic distribution of this therapy into the developing world (low- and middle-income countries) and a widening of the indications for surfactant use. This year the Workshop was held in Istanbul, home to many civilizations throughout history, from 23rd to 25th June, 2011.

Preterm birth and its association with respiratory distress syndrome have been the major causes of infant mortality in many countries for generations. The development of exogenous surfactant therapy for the respiratory distress syndrome over the past 30 years has led to a significant reduction in mortality from this disease and neonatal mortality overall. The story of lung surfactant has not arrived at its last chapter and some exciting research as reported in this conference is ongoing.

Important Pre-Conference Workshops on infant mortality in Turkey (Uğur Dilmen, Ankara), postnatal oxygenation in extremely low birth weight infants (Ola Saugstad, Oslo) and noninvasive ventilation (Rangasamy Ramanathan, Los Angeles) were followed by a roundtable discussion. Jatinder Bhatia (Augusta) discussed the interplay between nutrition and lung growth. Prior to the opening ceremony, the European guidelines for the management of respiratory distress syndrome were updated in a talk by David Sweet (Belfast).

The Third Bengt Robertson Memorial Lecture was given by Christian P. Speer, Director of Pediatrics at the Children's Hospital, University of Würzburg. His lecture was entitled 'Chorioamnionitis, inflammatory pathogenetic events and outcome of the very immature infant'. There is some evidence that histological chorioamnion-

itis has a short-term benefit on incidence and severity of respiratory distress syndrome in preterm infants. This maturational effect, however, is accompanied by a susceptibility of the lung for further postnatal injury which predisposes to bronchopulmonary dysplasia. His presentation was based on the hypothesis that neonatal respiratory distress syndrome has a complex and multifactorial pathogenesis characterized by an injurious inflammatory sequence in the immature lung. Bengt Robertson who first showed that natural surfactant was effective in the treatment of respiratory distress syndrome using a preterm rabbit model would have been interested in recent research on inflammation associated with this disorder.

Six distinguished scientists participated as invited speakers in this year's Workshop and a wide range of topics on pulmonary surfactant, pulmonary morbidity, lung protection, delivery room management of extremely low birth weight infants and oxygen targeting was covered. Boris Kramer from Maastricht discussed the assessment of acute and chronic pulmonary morbidity from inflammation using experimental models. Bernard Thébaud from Calgary provided an update on the roles of growth factors and stem cells in the pathogenesis of bronchopulmonary dysplasia. Lung recruitment and lung protective strategies were reviewed by Anton van Kaam from Amsterdam and Máximo Vento from Valencia discussed oxygen therapy for the extremely low birth weight infant in the delivery room. Roger Soll from Burlington gave an overview on recent trials providing evidence for delivery room management. The final invited lecture was given by Dharmapuri Vidyasagar from Chicago who reviewed surfactant replacement therapy in developing (or low-in-

come) countries providing useful guidelines for management of respiratory distress syndrome in parts of the world where resources are poor.

Many new exciting experimental and clinical studies related to surfactant therapy and pulmonary disorders were also reported during the 26th International Workshop on Surfactant Replacement. We received a record number of abstracts for free communications meaning that many contributors were disappointed when their submissions were not accepted for presentation. Fourteen oral communications, six short presentations and twenty-two posters were presented during the two-day meeting. Contributors represented many countries including Spain, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Russia, Poland, Belgium, USA, UK, Finland, the Netherlands, China and Norway.

The current issue of *Neonatology* contains the articles and abstracts from the Workshop and once again we would like to honor and remember Bengt Robertson who was responsible for founding this Workshop and the architect of our understanding of neonatal respiratory distress syndrome and its treatment with surfactant.

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