Preface

As our populations age, the prevalence of colonic diverticulosis and the complications of diverticulitis are steadily increasing. Thus, diverticular disease constitutes a challenge for diagnosis and treatment in daily practice and a significant burden for health care systems. Although diagnosis can be relatively straightforward, randomized controlled trials of clinical management are scarce and management follows tradition rather than principles of evidence-based medicine. Much is needed to be learnt.

The Falk Symposium No. 178 took place in Cologne, Germany, from September 2 to 3, 2011. It was entitled 'Diverticular disease: a fresh approach to a neglected disease'. The aim of the symposium was to review current scientific knowledge and its application to clinical practice. A critical interdisciplinary approach included epidemiology, anatomy, pathology, gastroenterology and surgery. Key challenges were identified, both research and clinical, for the future.

Thanks to the generous support of the Falk Foundation, it was possible to gather an international group of experts and physicians interested in the field and involved in the research of diverticular disease which facilitated deep insights and new concepts. Interdisciplinary discussions on questions such as decision making between ambulatory and hospital care or between surgical and conservative management led to useful results.

This issue of *Digestive Diseases* contains most of the contributions to the symposium. Thanks to the kind cooperation of the authors, an up-to-date and rather unique review of many aspects of diverticular disease is given here.

We will be very pleased if all the efforts put into the organization of the symposium would stimulate a deepened interest in clinical and research work in diverticular disease.

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