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Preface

Improved conditions of care for premature infants have led to markedly increased survival rates over the last few decades, particularly in infants with very low birth weight (<1,500 g) and extremely low birth weight (<1,000 g). Therefore, increased attention is now directed to improving long-term outcome, health and quality of life. Accumulating evidence demonstrates that nutritional care is a central cornerstone towards achieving this goal. Normal fetal growth in utero is extremely rapid, for example from 30 to 36 weeks of gestation fetal body weight doubles in only 6 weeks, along with remarkable tissue differentiation. It remains an enormous challenge to match this quantity and quality of growth and development in infants whose nutrient supply via the umbilical cord has been prematurely interrupted. Major progress has been achieved in our understanding of meeting their nutrient needs, but a surprising variability of neonatal nutritional support exists in clinical practice around the world, within countries, and even between different physicians working in one and the same neonatal unit. Current knowledge on nutrient requirements and the practice of nutritional care in premature infants is provided by this book, with a focus on very low birth weight infants. The most recent evidence and critical analyses were contributed by leading experts in the field from all five continents. The manuscripts have been shared among all authors and further reviewers who provided critical comments prior to a two-day authors’ meeting held in Munich, Germany, in July 2013. The authors presented their chapters which were critically discussed, and agreement on conclusions and recommendations was sought. The manuscripts were then thoroughly revised to comprise these considerations and to include latest knowledge as guidance for clinical application.

The editors and authors wish to thank Prof. Reginald Tsang (Cincinnati, Ohio, USA) who inspired the creation of this volume by editing two previous landmark books on this topic [1, 2] and kindly served as senior editorial advisor in the current project. We are grateful to Dr. Colin Rudolph and colleagues at the Mead Johnson Pediatric Nutrition Institute who kindly provided financial support to Karger Pub-
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