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Preface

This was a highly stimulating year for the Yearbook (June 2013 to May 2014). Among other findings, we cite and discuss: new managements for GH deficiency, PCOS, high cholesterol, pediatric osteoporosis, hypophosphatemia, cortisol replacement; new genes identified for severe obesity, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, precocious puberty, hypopituitarism, adrenal Cushing's, high and low calcium, and new mechanisms in appetite control, hypothyroidism, osteogenesis, and GH signaling. An artificial pancreas system with ‘threshold suspend’ automation was approved for the first time by the FDA for patients with diabetes and Google reported the development of a contact lens glucose monitor.

Citing it all is only possible due to our tireless team of Associate Editors, all internationally-renowned researchers and pediatric endocrinologists. We welcome Khalid Hussain, who introduces a new chapter on ‘Antenatal and neonatal endocrinology’.

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2013 went again to findings related to endocrinology. Thomas Südhof, James Rothman and Randy Schekman discovered the protein machinery of vesicle transport, establishing the general mechanisms that underlie a wide variety of physiological processes, including the controlled release of hormones and neurotransmitters. 2014 sees the 100th anniversary of two major events in endocrinology. In 1914, Ernest H. Starling defined a ‘hormone’ as ‘Any substance normally produced in the cells of some part of the body, and carried by the blood stream to distant parts, which it affects for the good of the organism as a whole. The hormones are thus the chemical means of correlation of the activities of different parts of the body’ [Proc R Soc Med 1914;7:29]. In the same year, Edward C. Kendall isolated thyroxine from the thyroid gland, claiming that it might be used to treat patients with hypothyroidism [J Biol Chem 1919;39:125]. Ten years later, Kendall would also isolate cortisol and for this he shared the 1950 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

While much attention has been drawn to the obesity epidemic in the affluent world, little has been discussed of the epidemic in developing countries. A recent report by the UK-based Overseas Development Institute highlighted that one in three people worldwide is now overweight or obese, and within 30 years obesity in developing world has quadrupled to nearly one billion people [see www.odi.org/future-diets]. Our community of pediatric endocrinologists has to take an active role in advocating ways to reduce this major health issue.

Finally, this is the 11th edition of the Yearbook project, which has been continuously supported by Pfizer Ltd and highly professionally produced by Karger Publishers. These contributions are much appreciated.

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Ken Ong (Cambridge)