Proceedings of the Conference ‘Periodontology Today’ held in Zurich May 6-8, 1988, on the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of the European Research Group for Oral Biology (ERGOB)

Periodontology Today

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32 figures and 29 tables, 1988

Drug Dosage
The authors and publisher have exerted every effort to ensure that drug selection and dosage set forth in this text are in accord with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication.

However, in view of ongoing research, changes in government regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to drug therapy and drug reactions, the reader is urged to check the package insert for each drug for any change in indications and dosage and for added warnings and precautions. This is particularly important when the recommended agent is a new and/or infrequently employed drug.

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Preface

The international conference Periodontology Today was organized to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the European Research Group for Oral Biology (ERGOB). This group was founded in 1968 during the Basel congress of the European Organization for Caries Research (ORCA). A group of young, angry, and ambitious researchers were frustrated by the 10-minute-paper-frame offered by established scientific organizations for the exchange of new information.

In consequence, ERGOB was founded with a constitution which seemed to guarantee a permanent revitalization and regeneration process. Since 1968 two meetings have been held annually. The size of the group was limited to a maximum of twelve participants to allow the free exchange of thoughts and the informal discussion of a wide spectrum of topics related to oral biology. These activities were sponsored on a long-term basis by AKZO Consumenten Produkten b.v.. The Hague, ELIDA Cosmetic, Zurich, and UNILEVER Research, Port Sunlight. We are most grateful to these companies for their long-lasting generous support which will keep ERGOB afloat also in the future.

In spite of a very successful operation during the past twenty years, ERGOB was not fully immune against a certain wear and the temptation of becoming a part of the scientific establishment. I am, however, convinced that these problems will be solved and ERGOB will keep its avant-garde position distinguishing this organization from other scientific bodies.

Leaving these thoughts which are a part of the self-examination process linked to anniversaries, we would prefer to explain the purpose of this conference and herewith the context of this book. The scope of this meeting was to assess the state of the art in periodontology today. There are a number of reasons for doing it at this point in time:

A great part of the world-wide dental research potential has gradually shifted to the periodontal area. Dental caries prevalence is substantially declining at least in developed countries. Years of basic caries research efforts and especially of preventive and community dentistry are bearing fruit. Further progress will be made.
however, although it appears to be rather technical than conceptual. In contrast, periodontontology is today a passionately debated issue. There is little consensus in fundamental perceptions of the pathogenesis, etiology and certain epidemiological aspects of periodontal diseases in spite of the fact that therapy and prevention of certain forms have steadily advanced in recent years.

Currently at debate are e.g. most simplistic concepts of the microbial etiology and indiscerning narrow views of the immunopathology of periodontal diseases. None of these concepts are really new. They rather have kept surfacing in various wrappings with a sinus-like function for almost a century. Some of the currently still widely accepted paradigms - like chronic gingivitis progressing inevitably to periodontitis - are not based on the strict experimental doctrine of Claude Bernard but have evolved by empirical thinking. On the other hand, many results of strictly controlled in vitro experiments using most advanced technology have provided a flood of new hypotheses on pathomechanisms of these diseases. However, the gap between the integration of the results of most elegant in vitro studies and the results of empirical thinking is not as wide as many might believe.

These are the issues which are addressed in this book and were discussed at the conference Periodontology Today. The scientific committee has carefully selected speakers known to take a stand for one or the other side on many debated issues in periodontontology today. While the overall structure of the resulting main chapters is not different from other publications, the titles within each chapter were formulated in a rather provocative way. This book is therefore not a volume of discovery of new research data but rather a document describing how existing data could be integrated into conceivable concepts. It furthermore contains a summary of the discussions which took place at the conference. They have been edited by the moderators of each session. From an intellectual point of view, it is a pleasure to read how this concentration of the best brains in the field coped with the polarity of views. As limited as the syntheses achieved may be, it was well worthwhile arranging the conference and publishing this book.

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