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Foreword

This is the Proceedings Volume of the International Symposium ‘Immunodeficiency
and Skin’, held during February 4-6, 1988, in Innsbruck,
Austria. The meeting was the latest ‘Clinical Oriented Symposium’ of the
European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR), jointly organized
with the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Dermatologische Forschung (ADF) and sponsored by the Austrian Dermatological Society and the Faculty of Medicine, University of Innsbruck.

There were several reasons why we thought that dermatologists should discuss basic and clinical aspects of immunodeficiency. The AIDS epidemic was a very obvious one, particularly in countries like Austria, where dermatology has been placed into the frontline of action. On the other hand, immunodeficiency states of other origin, like those associated with neoplastic disease, organ transplantation and chemotherapy, are on the rise as well and present a formidable challenge to clinical medicine. In this setting the contributions of dermatology are far from being trivial. Skin and mucous membranes not infrequently display heralding and presenting signs of immunodeficiency disorders and often continue to be the site of major disease manifestations. At the same time, dermatology is not quite the same in the immunodeficient as in the normal host. We are facing new entities and unexpected new features of familiar skin disorders; diagnosis and therapy is much more complex and more intricately linked to vital body functions than we are perhaps accustomed to. We may thus predict that problems linked to immunodeficiency will have a substantial impact on clinical dermatology. The number of immunodeficiency disorders and their dermatological implications is enormous and it was neither the scope of this symposium, nor was it possible to deal with all of them. We rather aimed at focussing on specific points which we expected to be helpful in securing the expanding limits of our specialty. Therefore, this volume does not lay claim to being a textbook. Like many Proceedings volumes, it is somewhat heterogeneous in structure, but we feel it may thus vividly convey the high spirits of the occasion.

We wish to thank all contributors as well as all those who helped us to organize this symposium and to put this volume together.

Innsbruck, June 1988

P. Fritsch
G. Schuler
H. Hintner