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Editors: M. Ciges, A. Campos

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In recent years pathobiology has become an area which integrates findings from cell biology and pathology. It now seems clear that there is a continuum between normal structure and function and lesional states, at least in the initial phases of the pathological process. The study of lesions and their inception, together with their structural and functional bases, when approached from a biological and clinical standpoint, constitutes the basic objective of any pathobiological analysis.

The inner ear is an area in which the vulnerable, specialized structures of the cochlear and vestibular regions are subjected to a variety of physical and chemical agents, which are, at times, the consequence of medical treatment.

The material in this volume was presented at the Inner Ear Pathobiology Symposium, held in Granada, September 18-20, 1989. Most of the articles deal with one of the following: (1) To elucidate the morphology, structure and development of specific areas of particular significance in certain pathological processes in the inner ear. (2) To characterize the initial development of lesions in the inner ear, not only from a morphostructural perspective but also in functional and, in some cases, clinical terms. These approaches are especially relevant to problems arising from ototoxicity. (3) To provide a solution, as far as current technology permits, to some of the methodological problems involved in the study of inner ear pathobiology. In this connection advanced techniques are described in this volume which provide us with a more direct access to the normal and damaged inner ear.

We are deeply indebted to the authors, who with their varied contributions not only bring us up to date on the biological and pathological aspects of the inner ear, but also point the way towards new avenues in our understanding of how lesions arise, the most accurate methodology to study them and their clinical and diagnostic implications. We also express our appreciation to the organizations which supported the Symposium, particularly the Consejerias de Educacion y Ciencia and Salud y Servicios Sociales de la Junta de Andalucia and VR Medical Team. Their collaboration made it possible to bring some of the most highly qualified experts from around the world to Granada, where we were able to advance our current knowledge of inner ear pathobiology and strengthen ties of friendships and cooperation among researchers and clinicians interested in the
inner ear. Finally, we would like to thank S. Karger publishers for their interest in making available to a wide readership the facts, ideas, and, of course, the applications of the recent findings and concepts brought to light in the Symposium.

Miguel Ciges
Antonio Campos