Editorial

We would like to take the opportunity of the first volume of Digestive Diseases under our editorial responsibility in conjunction with the new editorial board to thank our predecessor Dr. Achem for his invaluable efforts to maintain the journal in good function over many years. It has been his meritable contribution to assign the journal an educational role for the gastroenterologist in clinical practice.

Our evolving concept for the journal is to dedicate the 4 annual issues to specific gastrointestinal diseases or disease complexes and to provide an update on the essentials for the clinical management. It is our intention to implement also the progress in the understanding of basic disease-related mechanisms of gastrointestinal, hepatic and pancreatic diseases. Interdisciplinary efforts are the cornerstones for modern strategies in diagnosis and therapy and will adequately be respected in their relative contribution to disease management. As a special note for the journal actualisation we plan to include a limited number (up to four) original papers containing relevant clinical data related to the topics of the individual issues. For this purpose the topics will be announced in advance to allow readers to submit their own clinical studies which in case of successful peer review are guaranteed of rapid publication.

The 4 next issues starting from May 2001 will be:

- Pancreatic cancer
- Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- Helicobacter-related gastrointestinal diseases
- Liver cell cancer

In this first issue the focus is pointed to pancreatic cancer ranked fourth on the scale of lethal malignancies in some countries, less frequent in others.

The clinical facts at first glance appear still depressing as only around 5% of patients are curable at the stage of diagnosis. But there is a lot of promise arising from the horizon with significant progress in the understanding of molecular and biological mechanisms awaiting their translation into clinical effectiveness. This update dedicated to pancreatic cancer should allow the readers to get insight in the most important aspects of the disease.

Many thanks to all the authors for their hard work in providing manuscripts on such a short deadline and we hope that the readers of this journal will get good benefit for their clinical work.

P. Malfertheiner