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Hypotheses and Current Research

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Preface

Following highly successful meetings in Munich and Bethesda, Md., Innsbruck hosted the 6th Expert Meeting on Psychoimmunology on January 21–22, 2000. Maintaining a tradition of useful and fecund dialogue, this expert meeting not only offers a forum for the presentation of late-breaking data on the progress within the field of psychoimmunology but also provides a framework for informal discussions, which in turn lead to a comparison of international developments and the establishing of collaborations.

As at the five previous meetings the focus was on basic neurochemical/neuroimmunological research and on studies of immunological disorders and immunological dysfunctions in psychiatric disorders. The established concept behind this meeting has been to integrate basic and clinical sciences and this uniquely serves to promote better understanding and cooperation within this broad field. This philosophy is also reflected in the structure of the program and this book: the first part deals with hypotheses and findings concerning the mechanisms underlying immunomodulation. It is followed by more disease-specific chapters, in which immunological characteristics of various psychiatric disorders, including schizophrenia, depression and Alzheimer’s disease, are presented.

In recent years, we have witnessed a substantial increase both in the interest in and the knowledge of psychoneuroimmunology. In this context, the Expert Meeting on Psychoimmunology serves a number of important purposes: firstly, to advance the field by sharing experience and research findings with the leading groups in the field of psychoimmunology, secondly,
to prepare the ground for international collaborative research and thirdly, to make the results of these efforts available to a broader public, as it is hopefully achieved through publishing the proceedings of these meetings. In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to all the participants of the meeting who have agreed to contribute to these efforts, to Margot Pölzl for her exquisite organizational assistance as well as to the team at Karger for editorial support. This meeting was made possible by funds of the Verein zur Förderung der Biologischen Psychiatrie in Tirol.

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