Glucocorticoid-Induced Osteoporosis
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Endocrinologists are often subject to the accusation that they deal with fascinating but rare syndromes, and thus that their interests, both research and clinical, only infrequently impinge on clinical practice. While this is generally unfair, there may at least be grain of truth in this. However, when we come to consider osteoporosis, we are undoubtedly dealing with a problem that affects millions of individuals worldwide. For many years this common and distressing condition was little studied, but over the last decade or so there has been an enormous, and continuing, volume of research in this area, not least because the pharmaceutical industry has recognised the vast market for drug treatment in this condition.

Together with basic studies on the provenance of osteoporosis, the contribution of pharmacological doses of glucocorticoids to the clinical problem of osteoporosis has been subject to increasing scrutiny. In particular, the possibility that the remedial activity of these agents could be maintained, while minimising one of their most important adverse effects, has been subject to a great deal of research. In 1999, Andrea Giustina and his colleagues convened the first meeting of experts on glucocorticoids-induced osteoporosis from all over the world, including both sides of the Atlantic. Contributions were included from a whole variety of basic scientists, endocrinologists, rheumatologists and other specialists, and a broad consensus was reached about the mode of action of glucocorticoids in the pathogenesis of osteoporosis, their importance in clinical practice, and most importantly, the therapies we now have available for treatment. At the same time, possible future therapies and their scientific basis was considered. There was also discussion of the future directions that research and
therapy was likely to take. This volume is in part a record of that meeting, but in addition, offers a concise survey of the whole field, carefully put together by leading authorities in the field. I am sure it will be of great interest to both research scientists and practising clinicians in this vital and important area of study.

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