Editorial

The past century has started with a struggle to develop novel devices for the endoluminal exploration of the digestive system and ended in glory with unexpected achievements with regard to advanced 'high-tech' endoscopy.

These achievements include refinements in diagnostic resolution and the opening of new frontiers in interventional endoscopy; in addition, the handling of endoscopic methods has been improved to a point that finds also a better patient acceptance.

The evolution in endoscopic techniques is moving at a fast pace, and because of high-resolution images, we are approaching the era of 'molecular' endoscopy.

This issue of *Digestive Diseases* reviews some of the latest major established progress in diagnostic and interventional endoscopy, including methods that are currently becoming part of today's clinical management.

Refined technologies may not always reflect true clinical progress and therefore, a critical evaluation of the clinically introduced new developments needs to be incorporated in such an update.

A word of caution needs to be expressed when the enthusiasm for new technologies promotes their use in clinical practice without exhaustive prior research in the form of adequate clinical trials. Such studies remain a crucial step in optimizing the individual application of advanced endoscopic technology.

Finally it is appropriate in this fascinating world of technological progress not to forget to develop parallel instruments for a better and more detailed understanding of the subjective expressions and needs of our patients. The development of a self-administered symptom questionnaire is such an example.

We hope that our colleagues will appreciate the critical updates of some of the latest issues in diagnostic and interventional endoscopy and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors for their effort to contribute to this issue!

Peter Malfertheiner