Preface

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After the development of flexible bronchoscopy by the late Dr. Shigeto Ikeda, who died in 2001, it has become possible to perform bronchial biopsies in asthmatic patients, and histopathological studies have disclosed that the asthmatic airway is characterized by chronic inflammation consisting of desquamation of epithelial cells, thickening of the region adjacent to the basement membrane and accumulation of activated eosinophils in the subepithelial region, even in mild asthma. Although eosinophils have been found to play a pivotal role in the development of airway inflammation in asthma, a humanized anti-IL-5 monoclonal antibody has not shown any beneficial effects on asthma in clinical studies. This raised more questions about the functional involvement of eosinophils in asthma or allergic diseases and encouraged us researchers to study those cells from a different point of view in order achieve a breakthrough in the research on eosinophils.

The 14th Annual Workshop on 'Eosinophils in Allergy and Related Diseases 2002' was held at Otemachi Sankei Plaza in Tokyo on June 15, 2002. There were 6 sessions, and 19 papers were presented. This supplement issue of *International Archives of Allergy and Immunology* publishes the different presentations as peer-reviewed reviews, original papers, abstracts, or only titles. Those appearing as abstracts or titles only are ongoing studies or are scheduled for publication in different journals as full papers. The workshop will be continued to maintain the eosinophil research active, significant and fruitful.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Novartis Pharma K.K.(Tokyo) for their supporting this workshop, and to the staff of International Medical Publishers Ltd.(Tokyo) for their excellent editorial work.