Editorial

The identification of antineutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies (ANCA) in 1984 was an important breakthrough in our understanding of the pathogenesis, classification, diagnosis and monitoring of the activity of small vessel vasculitides. ANCA workshops since then contributed significantly to the further progress and international cooperation in the field of ANCA-associated diseases.

The 11th International ANCA and Vasculitis Workshop, which has been taking place in Prague on October 2–5, 2003, attracted both research workers and clinicians, mostly nephrologists, rheumatologists and immunologists, but also pneumologists and ENT specialists.

In this special issue of *Kidney and Blood Pressure Research* we present 5 state-of-the-art lectures prepared by the leading experts in the field of vasculitis. Two of these lectures are dedicated to the pathogenesis of vasculitis: The Th1 and Th2 paradigm in ANCA-associated vasculitis, and ANCA and neutrophil biology. The other three concentrate on important clinical (diagnostic and therapeutic) aspects: ANCA testing in monitoring the activity of the disease; current attitudes to the therapy of vasculitis, and the current status of TNF inhibition strategies in the treatment of vasculitis.

The second part contains the abstracts accepted for publication either as oral presentations (O) or posters (P), organized into the following topics: epidemiology and genetics of vasculitis; pathogenesis of vasculitis; ANCA and neutrophil biology; ANCA testing, its use in diagnostics and monitoring of the disease activity; are ANCA titers predictive for relapses of vasculitis?; ANCA type and the pathology and clinical phenotype of vasculitis; rarer forms and presentations of vasculitis; therapy of vasculitis, and assessment of disease activity and management of toxicities of available therapies.

This issue thus brings to the reader several short reviews on the most relevant topics in the field of vasculitis combined with an outline of the ongoing research in this area.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the members of the programme selection committee Jan Willem Cohen Tervaert, Niels Rasmussen, Gary Hoffman and John Stone for their invaluable help.

Vladimir Tesar, David Jayne, Guest Editors