Introduction

In July 2003, the European Organization of Caries Research (ORCA) celebrated its 50th anniversary. This event was marked by a special symposium in connection with the 50th annual congress, held at ORCA's birthplace, in Konstanz, Germany. The title of the symposium was 'Cariology in the 21st century – state of the art and future perspectives'.

The current issue of *Caries Research* is devoted to the proceedings of this symposium.

The symposium aimed to provide an update on the core issues of cariology and included aspects of diagnosis, prevention and management of the disease. In accordance with the objectives of ORCA, a session was specifically devoted to the problem of how to translate research findings into clinical practice.

The format of the symposium was based on short presentations, in which each presenter was asked to review the literature within a certain field and to generate suggestions for future research. Presenters were specifically asked to address the potential impact of the research on clinical practice.

Each session was followed by a structured discussion around designated themes. A short summary of the discussions is placed at the end of this issue.

The purpose of publishing this special issue of *Caries Research* is to make the knowledge generated at the symposium available to as broad an audience as possible.

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Symposium Organizers and Guest Editors