Foreword

The articles in this proceedings are based on presentations given during a symposium entitled 'Innovations in Growth Hormone Therapy: The Power of Observation'. This symposium formed part of the 11th Meeting of the European Neuroendocrine Association in Sorrento, Italy, against the stunning backdrop of the Bay of Naples.

The theme linking the five presentations at the symposium was that of growth hormone (GH) registries, the role they have played in developing our understanding of GH deficiency (GHD) and its treatment, and the continuing place of registries in future research. The faculty consisted of distinguished adult endocrinologists from across Europe, four of whom – Professors M. Pugeat (Lyon, France), A. Heufelder (Munich, Germany), A. Leal Cerro (Seville, Spain) and J. Isgaard (Stockholm, Sweden) – are members of the Scientific Advisory Board for the adult arm of the new MEGHA database. We were also delighted to welcome Professor S. Shalet (Manchester, UK) to speak on the important topic of GH and the transition period from childhood to adulthood.

The symposium was opened by Professor Pugeat with a presentation describing some of the reasons why registries are an important part of GH research. He went on to cover the basic aims of GH registries and finished by outlining the novel features available to those who participate in the MEGHA project. Next, Professor Heufelder looked at some of the reasons why the prescribing of GH and management of patients varies around the world, concluding with some of the ways in which registries can assist in assessing these differences.

Adolescence is a critical time in the lives of GH-deficient patients. Professor Shalet reviewed the available data from studies on patients in the transition period, and presented recommendations regarding the diagnosis and treatment of transition patients. Looking beyond transition, Professor Leal Cerro outlined the consequences of long-term GHD and the challenges involved in successfully maintaining patients on GH replacement for a lifetime. Given the difficulties of carrying out long-term clinical trials, data from registries have an essential role to play in meeting these challenges.

The symposium ended with Professor Isgaard's detailed review of the relationship between GHD and cardiovascular disease. Professor Isgaard also described the beneficial effects of GH replacement therapy on cardiovascular risk and the potential role of observational registries such as MEGHA in further clarifying the relationship between GH, cardiovascular disease and mortality.

We would like to thank all the speakers and the organizers of the symposium, and we hope that you find the articles in this proceedings interesting and informative.

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