Preface

Eosinophils possess a wide variety of biological properties, including the capacity to release toxic granule proteins, cysteinyl leukotrienes, oxygen free radicals, platelet-activating factor, Th2 cytokines, and a range of growth factors. For many years it has been recognized that eosinophils have the potential to cause damage to the airway epithelium, bronchoconstriction, mucosal edema, mucus hypersecretion and airway hyperresponsiveness. Although this broad hypothesis has not been proven by clinical studies with an interleukin-5-blocking monoclonal antibody administered in patients with asthma, the results of one clinical study have suggested a role for eosinophils in airway remodeling in asthma. Recent animal studies involving eosinophil-specific gene deletion also indicate a possible role for eosinophils in repair and remodeling processes. Thus, eosinophils continue to be a source of fascination and the subject of intensive research both by clinicians and basic scientists.

The 16th Annual Workshop on Eosinophils in Allergy and Related Diseases was held in Tokyo on June 26, 2004, with 23 presentations in the fields of basic and clinical research on eosinophils and allergy. Forefront researchers in this field in Japan and Korea gathered, presented and discussed their cutting-edge data including differentiation, migration and activation of eosinophils, their gene expression, and the role of eosinophils in allergic diseases. The present proceedings include twelve original articles and one review which were peer-reviewed by two board members of this meeting. Abstracts of four presentations and titles of six presentations are also included.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to Novartis Pharma KK (Tokyo) for supporting this workshop and to the International Medical Publishers (Tokyo) for providing expert and untiring editorial assistance.

Takeshi Fukuda
Tochigi, Japan