Preface

A recent survey of biomedical publications from Arab countries showed that they produce less than 1% of the biomedical citations in the world, despite the available wealth and resources [1]. Small countries such as Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon were found to be more productive than larger countries, but biomedical research was found to focus mainly on curative services rather than research and development in areas such as molecular genetics. The ongoing revolution in the field of molecular biology makes it mandatory for all biomedical scientists to familiarize themselves with its implications for the practice of medicine. With this background, the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University, Kuwait, held an International Conference on the Applications of Molecular Biology in Modern Medicine, March 7–11, 2004. This supplement is based on the papers presented at the conference. The Central Organising Committee set the following goals for the conference:

- 1 to raise awareness about molecular biology and its applications with relevance to Kuwait in particular, and the Arabian Gulf in general;
- 2 to show to the outside world the research that has been done in Kuwait;
- 3 to provide training in some of the practical aspects of molecular biology;
- 4 to initiate and foster collaborative research between researchers in Kuwait and experts from other parts of the world.

The conference covered the applications of molecular biology in four areas – haematology, infectious diseases, cancer and metabolic diseases. High-calibre international, regional and local speakers were invited to give keynote addresses and there were also free oral presentations. The papers and abstracts presented in this supplement

can be seen to have done full justice to the subject considering the breadth of presentations ranging from diagnosis, therapeutics, genotype/phenotype interaction to anthropology. It is noteworthy that the majority of the papers/abstracts came from investigators in Kuwait. On behalf of the Central Organising Committee, we should like to express our gratitude to all our sponsors especially: Kuwait University; Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS); Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS), and Kuwait Oil Corporation (KOC). We could not have produced this supplement without the generous financial support from the Company for Financial Center and Yousuf Ibrahim Al-Ghanim Company (YIACO), Kuwait. We are also indebted to the Editor-in-Chief, Professor Farida Al-Awadi, and the Editor, Professor Azu Owunwanne, for their help and unwavering commitment to the publication of this supplement. Last, but not least, we would like to thank all the participants at the conference and those who have generously given of their time to provide manuscripts. We hope that the content of these pages will go some way towards redressing the situation indicated by Tadmouri and Bissar-Tadmouri [1].

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Organising Committee

Reference

- 1 Tadmouri GO, Bissar-Tadmouri N: Biomedical publications in an unstable region: The Arab world, 1988–2002. *Lancet* 2003;362:1766.