Preface

KIGS (Pfizer International Growth Database) and KIMS (Pfizer International Metabolic Database) are Pfizer's long-running databases about the effect of growth hormone (GH) therapy on growth and metabolism, respectively. The KIGS/KIMS Expert Meetings share the aim of the databases of expanding knowledge in the field of growth and GH therapy. The meetings provide a debating forum for groups of experts coming from different areas of expertise. In particular, controversial and less well-known areas have been chosen for debate, and a process of consensus formation and standardization of methodology has been attempted.

The first KIGS Expert Meeting (before the advent of KIMS) was held in Italy in 1995, and addressed the subject of bone maturation and idiopathic short stature (the proceedings were published in *Hormone Research* 1996, vol. 45, suppl 2). The following three meetings were also held in Italy. In 1996 the subject under discussion was the evaluation of body composition in children born small for gestational age (*Hormone Research* 1997, vol. 48, suppl 1). The next meeting incorporated KIMS for the first time and covered the topic of GH measurements in the clinical setting. It also addressed the role of large-scale databases such as KIGS and KIMS in evidence-based medicine (*Hormone Research* 1999, vol. 51, suppl 1). A year later, the 4th KIGS/KIMS Expert Meeting focused on GH and bone, and participants discussed the use of different markers of bone strength and methods for assessing fracture risk (*Hormone Research* 2000, vol. 54, suppl 1). In 2001, the 5th Expert Meeting was held in the UK, and addressed the topics of GH sensitivity and the standardization of the measurement of insulin-like growth factor (IGF)-I (*Hormone Research* 2001, vol. 55, suppl 2). In 2002, the meeting returned to Italy, where participants discussed the alteration in GH physiology at differ-

ent stages of life, including early infancy, puberty, adolescence and old age, and the challenges of managing GH deficiency in patients at these life stages (*Hormone Research* 2003, vol. 60, suppl 1). The next KIGS/KIMS Expert Meeting was held in France in 2004, and focused on the diagnostic value of IGF-I, and its role in determining the efficacy and safety of GH therapy (*Hormone Research* 2004, vol. 62, suppl 1).

This brings us to the latest Expert Meeting, which was held in France in January 2005. The meeting started with wide-ranging discussion of insulin insensitivity, from the effects of pre-natal and early post-natal growth on the risk of developing insulin insensitivity in adulthood, to the impact of insulin insensitivity on cardiovascular risk. The methods by which insulin insensitivity is measured were discussed in depth, as was the clinical impact of insensitivity, particularly in patients who are GH deficient. The second topic of discussion was neurocognition, and included methods to measure neurocognitive function and the effects of GH deficiency on neurocognition in both children and adults.

The participants of the 8th KIGS/KIMS Expert Meeting would like to thank Patrick Wilton, Margaretha Lindell, Maria Koltowska-Häggström and Pfizer Endocrine Care, for their ongoing support of these meetings. The editors would also like to thank the members of the KIGS/KIMS Strategic Planning Committees, and the invited experts for their participation and valuable contributions. We hope that this supplement will be of interest and of use to all those involved in the treatment of GH deficiency and to the wider clinical and scientific community. We sincerely hope that the organizers will continue to support this series of meetings in the coming years.

Michael B. Ranke, Tübingen, Germany

Mary Lee Vance, Charlottesville, Va., USA