

Special issue: Polyamines and transglutaminases

S. Beninati, M. Piacentini, and A. Abbruzzese

Editorial

During the past decade we have witnessed an explosion in scientific information, and the literature in the biological sciences has almost doubled. Research in Polyamines and Transglutaminases was not an exception. To cope with this information growth, an increased number of meetings were organized. As in every moving field, it is essential that scientists meet and discuss with each other finding out the best way for rapid, solid and fruitful scientific progress and this was the main goal of the 8th edition of the International Congress on Amino Acids and Proteins (8th ICAAP) held in Roma (Italy) in September 2003.

This volume contains a selection of contributions originally presented at the 8th ICAAP, under the auspices of the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" and the University of Rome "La Sapienza".

The first part of this issue, focused on polyamines, begins with a very concise opening review about polyamines and cancer, presented by U. Bachrach, one of the fathers of this field. The section includes some interesting observations on oxidative degradation of spermine, cross-talk between polyamines and histamine, polyamines as substrate for cross linking of proteins, nitric oxide and polyamines in inflammation, tumorogenesis and apoptosis. The second part is essentially concerned with novel aspects of transglutaminases in pathology (neurodegen-

eration, abnormal wound healing, celiac disease and polyglutamine diseases) with a new biotechnology application (molecular farming in plants). We have also selected two communications presented at the congress section on "Modification of Amino Acids and Proteins" dealing with tumorigenesis and antitumor therapy.

This volume is intended to furnish the reader with a general view of the state of the art. We hope that these proceedings will inform and stimulate the readers as much as did the participants in the conference.

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*Simone Beninati
Mauro Piacentini and
Alberto Abbruzzese*