

EDITORIAL

The papers appearing in this issue were presented at the sixth Symposium organised by the Editors of "*Biochemical Pharmacology*" and sponsored by Pergamon Press. It was held in Oxford, U.K., on the 23rd and 24th of July, 1993.

The aim of these Symposia is to focus on a topic, which at the time of the meeting is not in the mainstream of biochemical pharmacology and drug development, but which the Editors feel highlights an area of research that promises to become highly relevant to this subject in the near future.

The Symposia were initiated 10 years ago to recognise that the journal had been in existence for 25 years, and Pergamon Press has continued to sponsor these meetings, all of the same general format, in alternate years. The format has been that participation was by invitation only, and the size of the meeting was restricted to 50 invited participants.

Looking back over the past Symposia, one is struck by the extent of progress in the topics of these conferences. Ten years ago, the first Symposium concentrated on the theme that the mode of action of drugs and of growth factors and hormones had much in common. This was then a novel idea, but today it constitutes a major route to drug development.

Similarly, the Symposium of 8 years ago on bioreduction preceded the large research effort to apply this concept to the development of chemotherapeutic agents in cancer. Since solid

tumours are uniquely distinguished from normal tissue in having hypoxic areas, they can be selectively killed by agents that undergo metabolic activation by bioreduction.

The Symposium on the importance of stereochemistry in drug action anticipated the current emphasis to manufacture drugs with chiral centres as the stereoisomer with the desired biological properties.

The meeting held 4 years ago at the Yale University School of Medicine concentrated on progress in computer-assisted drug design based upon structural information on protein targets obtained by NMR. Again, this has become a widely used procedure.

The topic of the meeting reported in this issue will, we trust, foreshadow approaches that will become central to biochemical pharmacology in the near future.

The Editors and publishers have decided to continue the Symposia in alternate years, but to change the format in order to make them into open meetings limited in size to approximately 200 participants. The Symposia will be held alternately in Europe and in the Americas. The next Symposium will be held in the United States of America in July, 1995. The topic will be: "Modern Methods of Drug Discovery". Information on the scientific programme of this Symposium and details on enrolment, location, and registration fees will be announced in the Journal in the late summer of 1994.

The Editors