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Preface

Neuronal nicotinic receptors and ligands

In June of 2003, The National Institute on Drug Abuse sponsored a meeting titled Neuronal Nicotinic Receptors and Ligands: Targets for Medication. The meeting, held in Bal Harbour, Florida, featured presentations from leading national and international researchers focusing on the structure and function of nicotinic cholinergic receptors, modeling receptor structure and activity, ligand design and the utility of nicotinic cholinergic ligands in research and treatment. These areas reflect NIDA's growing interest in the nicotinic receptor and its ligands because of the role that they play in nicotine addiction and potential treatment for smoking cessation. Moreover, there is recognition at NIDA, as there is elsewhere, that nicotine addiction may be a particularly useful model addiction on which successful medication development approaches might be advanced through the translation of preclinical science to drug development. Indeed the Bal Harbour meeting brought together scientists from the pharmaceutical industry along with those from academia and the biotechnology field.

As organizers of the meeting, we were thrilled by the level of participation and the enthusiasm that was generated. The manuscripts published in the issue of *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters* captures some of the excitement of the meeting and promise for significant breakthroughs in the near future. There was clear evidence that the meeting spawned collaborative interests amongst the participants, some resulting already in research applications to NIH. In addition, the meeting provided feedback and recommendations to NIDA on these advances and opportunities in the field, such as the establishment of databases and libraries. Recommendations are significant and timely given the recent ongoing Roadmap initiatives at the National Institutes of Health.

We hope that readers of this issue will find it instructive. It is certainly a vehicle through which the Bal Harbour meeting is able to reach a wider audience. We thank the authors for taking the time to provide these contributions.

William A. Corrigall, Ph.D., *Director, Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction Program*

Rao Rapaka, Ph.D., *Chief, Chemistry and Physiological Systems Branch*

Francis Vocci, *Director, Division of Treatment Research and Development*

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