



# Preface for 1st Symposium of Japanese Consortium for Glycobiology and Glycotechnology

Research in the fields of glycobiology and glycotechnology in Japan is enjoying a great deal of growth and development, but the way in which this growth has been supported is probably unique to Japan. Funding comes mainly in the form of grants from the Japanese government, most from the Ministries of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology (MEXT) and Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). Currently there are two major groups funded by MEXT, through the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), and another by METI through the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO). These groups are made up of several core members and from ten to sixty research projects. The progress made in Japan could not have been accomplished without the funding provided by MEXT and METI. The impetus for this funding is provided by the Council for Science and Technology, a cabinet-level office and the prime mover for governmental policies with regard to science and technology, which has clearly designated the fields of glycobiology and glycotechnology as one of prime areas for emphasis in research and development.

In order to build on existing momentum, it was determined among glycobiologists in Japan that an organization for promoting information exchange and the development of a system of sharing advanced technology and resources for further development would become indispensable. Thus, the Japan

Consortium for Glycobiology and Glycotechnology (JCGG) was established in April 2004. The first symposium, a one-day affair, was held November 4, 2003, and a second is currently being planned for August 25, 2004. To augment these efforts, the editors of the Glycoconjugate Journal graciously proposed the publication of a special issue covering recent developments and promising studies being carried out in Japan, a proposal to which JCGG participants readily agreed. The result is this current issue.

In this issue are published 13 mini-reviews and one original paper, each of which covers an outstanding effort in the field. All manuscripts were reviewed by an editorial board of scientists in the field as well as outside experts. Of course, it was not possible to cover all the activities underway by JCGG members, and another publication to try to fill that gap is under consideration.

The editors wish to express their gratitude to all contributors and reviewers for their efforts in making this special issue of the Glycoconjugate Journal possible. We hope that the content will suffice to provide at least a summary picture of the work that is being done in this field in Japan, and further that it will be of assistance to the Japanese world of glycobiology and glycotechnology, as the field continues to expand and develop.

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Editors