

Foreword

Consensus symposium on combined antiviral therapy

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Although considerable progress has been made in antiviral research, the need for improved therapeutic modalities is great. In addition to the continuing research for new and improved antivirals, the strategy of combination chemotherapy is being extensively investigated. For persistent viral infections with high levels of replication like human immunodeficiency virus and the hepatitis viruses, such a strategy may be essential. Some combinations may prove useful in improving efficacy, reducing toxicity, delay antiviral resistance and increasing coverage for drug resistant viruses.

A Consensus Symposium on Combined Antiviral Therapy developed and convened by the Macrae Group, New York, New York and co-sponsored by the International Society for Antiviral Research, and the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (USA), was held July 25–27 in Lisbon, Portugal. This Symposium was organized to bring together leaders both at

the laboratory and clinical levels in various aspects of research in combination therapy directed at all virus infections. Several speakers reviewed the successes and limitations of current monotherapy for diseases caused by a number of viruses including herpesviruses, respiratory viruses, hepatitis viruses and human immunodeficiency virus. The main focus of this symposium was to review the status of using combined therapy for these viral diseases and to make recommendations for the future use of combinations of available antiviral drugs that could result in increased efficacy and reduced toxicity.

The contributions of the participants were then condensed by a panel of leaders in the field and a consensus document summarizing the presentations and discussions was prepared. The overall consensus summary for this symposium along with Short Communications from a majority of Invited Speakers are included in this issue of the journal.