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Editorial

Glycoconjugate researchers have given considerable attention to the role of the 'glycogenes' which encode the glycosyltransferases. A great deal of evidence now supports the view that the glycosyltransferases have come of age in the life sciences since some 30 glycosyltransferase genes have been cloned and characterized to date. This area of research is having an ever-growing impact on a wide range of physiological and pathophysiological conditions. Studies using transgenic mouse strategies, such as 'gene knock out' or overexpressed genes as well as various gene transfection experiments, indicate that the glycosyltransferases are involved in morphogenesis, differentiation, growth, carcinogenesis and cancer metastasis.

I have been asked by Dr Harry Schachter, Chief Editor of this journal, to plan a special issue on glycosyltransferases. I also felt that the planning of a special issue on glycosyltransferases was both timely and long overdue. We are presenting manuscripts which have been carefully reviewed by various editorial board members and selected in order to highlight some of the major developments which have inspired this interesting research area. This special issue in the field of glycobiology and glycotechnology is the first *Glycoconjugate Journal* issue dedicated to the glycosyltransferases and their genes. We hope that this issue will further endorse the *Glycoconjugate Journal* as one of the pre-eminent journals in this field. It is our wish that this special issue will be of assistance to the increasing number of scientists working in this area of research, and that the field will expand as rapidly during the present decade as it has during the past decade.

I greatly acknowledge the help of all those who contributed manuscripts and kept to the deadline for this special issue. A special thank you is owed to Dr Toshiaki Osawa, Associate Editor, for handling the reviews of all manuscripts, and to Dr Schachter for having planned the special issue with me, as well as giving me an opportunity to prepare a mini-review article. I also thank Ms Yumiko Fukui in our department for her skilful assistance.

I dedicate this special issue to the memory of Dr Alton Meister who until his sudden death on April 6 1995 was Professor of Biochemistry at Cornell University Medical College. Professor Meister was carrying out collaborative work with me on an interesting glycoprotein, gamma-glutamyltranspeptidase, which is a major enzyme of the glutamyl cycle as well as a likely natural substrate for N-acetylglucosaminyltransferase III.

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