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Foreword

The 13th Montreux symposium on LC-MS, CE-MS and MS-MS was held in Montreux on November 13-15 1996. The fast growing field of LC-MS as technology was clearly reflected in the growing number of participants and contributions. A further clear shift towards application fields especially in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology field was observed.

The most remarkable impact and very stimulating impulse to the symposium was the introduction of various new bench-top LC-MS(/MS) instruments, opening the access of the technology to many more scientists and application laboratories. This made the exhibition very lively and provided an excellent forum for having new technologies being presented and highlighted during the scientific session, while the state-of-the art hardware and software was present as well.

In the scientific programme a strong focus was on the miniaturization both of the separation science as well as the interface technology. Nanospray and microspray technology was shown to push the lower absolute detection limits even further and also opened up new ways of combination with electromigration approaches. Combined with fast detection systems such as time-of-flight and ion trap technology combined with other analyzers gave also significant improvements in detection and MS/MS performance.

In separation science especially capillary electrochromatography, pressurized-electro chromatography and iso-electric focussing were further developed and open new ways of analysing complex samples. Also electro-extraction technology pushed the developments in sample preparation to more automation, which becomes an important issue to further improve the overall efficiency of LC-MS/MS systems.

In the application field pharmaceutical and biotechnology dominated with some special accents on combinatorial technology, automated bioanalysis and protein characterization, while further work was focussed on food and environmental industry. The most dominating technologies used were based on atmospheric pressure ionization techniques (ESI and APCI), but still a substantial contribution was observed from other interfaces such as particle beam and thermospray.

In conclusion the enthusiasm among the participants and the new still growing potential of LC-MS revealed by the many contributors, made the symposium to a success both for the experienced participants as well as the new comers in the field. The venue of Montreux contributed as always to a stimulating atmosphere and a pleasant social imbedding of the event.

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