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## Preface

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The 23rd Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Biomedical Mass Spectrometry (JSBMS) was held at Kanazawa City Bunka Hall in Kanazawa, Japan, September 24–26, 1998. Selected papers from this meeting are published in this special issue to illustrate the scientific exchange between different fields of life science.

This year's meeting featured three lectures, three symposia and 28 oral presentations. The guests, Professor Murphy, Yates and Desiderio presented on phospholipid, proteome and neuropeptides, respectively. Earlier restriction of mass spectrometry to small easily volatilized molecules has been overcome with new ionization methods, allowing biopolymers to be analyzed. In our first symposium entitled 'New Trends in the Mass Spectrometry of Biopolymers', four Japanese pioneers presented their recent studies on structural analysis of variant proteins and triplet repeats in DNA in various diseases, natural products, and FT-ICRMS. Recent advances in mass spectrometry have stimulated its widespread application for the analysis of various substances, and are playing a key role in clinical diagnosis and basic research in various diseases. In the second symposium 'Mass Screening and Chemical Diagnosis of Metabolic Disorders in Asian Countries', Professors Dave from India, Wasant from Thailand, Dong from China (unable to attend) and Kuhara from Japan gave presentations concerning the current status of screening of inborn errors of metabolism in their countries. Biological, biomedical and clinical sciences are going to witness a number of spectacular advances involving the application of mass spectrometry in the elucidation of the structure of abnor-

mal metabolites in diseases and in metabolic profiling studies. In the third symposium 'New Development in the Application of Mass Spectrometry to Clinical Medicine,' the pilot study of neonatal screening using tandem mass spectrometer and metabolic studies on uremia or diabetes were discussed. The topics of the oral presentations included mass spectrometric application to forensic toxicology, biochemistry of lipids (steroids, bile acids, prostaglandins, sphingolipids, etc.), the analysis of variant or modified hemoglobin and the studies of inherited metabolic disorders of fatty acids, organic acids and sugars. Major mass spectrometer-instrumentation companies and suppliers gave an interesting exhibition throughout the entire three days of the meeting. The morning of the last day was devoted to the workshop 'Information on New Instruments' by the companies and suppliers.

Approximately 220 scientists participated in the meeting. We believe that all the participants enjoyed scientifically exciting and informative discussions and relaxed exchanges of ideas and opinions. It is hoped that you will find, as we have, the results of this meeting to be interesting, informative, and a true reflection of the status of modern biomedical mass spectrometry.

Tomiko Kuhara,  
*Chairperson of 23rd JSBMS*  
Toshimitsu Niwa,  
*Editor-in-Chief of JSBMS*  
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