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Preface

The 24th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Biomedical Mass Spectrometry (JSBMS) was held at Amagasaki City Cultural Center in Hyogo, Japan, September 23–25, 1999. To accomplish the main theme of this year's meeting "Searching the new trends in medical application of mass spectrometry", ten speakers were invited from the fields unfamiliar to JSBMS members. The meeting featured an invited lecture, two symposia, two workshops and 26 oral presentations.

Dr. Sanford P. Markey, National Institute of Mental Health, NIH, and also an honorary member of JSBMS, delivered an enlightening lecture entitled "Tryptophan metabolism: New insights from mass spectrometric studies". In the first symposium "Mass spectrometric analysis of endocrine disrupting chemicals", five Japanese analysts presented their sophisticated devices for the determination of polychlorinated substances and arsenic compounds, and some results obtained from biological and environmental samples. In the second symposium concerning the metabolic disorders, three leading researchers stated the recent advance in neonatal screening for inherited metabolic diseases by GC-MS of urine after urease treatment. In the first

workshop "Breath test and mass spectrometry", five researchers reported the usefulness of ^{13}C breath test in the diagnosis of *Helicobacter pylori* infection, gastrointestinal surgery and studies of liver function.

The topics of the oral presentations included mass spectrometric application to neurochemistry, protein chemistry, pharmacology, forensic toxicology, clinical genetics, endocrinology, nephrology, radiology, sport medicine, environmental medicine and so on.

The morning of the last day was devoted, as usual, to the workshop "Information on new instruments" by their companies and suppliers. An exhibition of a gas isotope ratio mass spectrometer was well received during the meeting.

Approximately 130 scientists participated in the meeting. We hope that it would be a tribute to the exciting growth of JSBMS. Selected papers from the meeting are published in this special issue.

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