



Preface

Forensic toxicology is a demanding discipline that pertains, in addition to toxicology, to analytical sciences, pharmacology, medicine, law, etc. The professionals in this field come from all these different specialties. Moreover, the number of forensic toxicologists in small or middle-sized countries (such as most European countries) is often too small to create a national scientific society. Hence the importance of the International Association of Forensic Toxicologists (TIAFT) and of its annual meeting, on an educational as well as scientific ground.

As the meeting held in Paris, from August 26 to 30, 2002, was the 40th TIAFT meeting, an anniversary ceremony was organized, with speeches in French from former, current and future presidents as well as distinguished members. It's thus been forty years that forensic toxicologists from all over the world share their knowledge and this year was particularly successful in this respect, since 53 countries were represented by 535 participants. A total of 73 oral communications and 149 posters were presented during 11 oral and 7 poster sessions, covering varied areas such as drugs of abuse, new analytical tools, alternative specimens (a joint session was organized with the Society of Hair Testing), alcohol, drugs and driving, post-mortem toxicology cases, and even clinical toxicology (as a joint session with the International Association of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology, IATDMCT), as well as various other topics during "free" sessions.

The traditional TIAFT meeting Proceedings, presented this year under CD-Rom format, will contain all the communications made during this meeting. In addition, selected papers reporting forensic applications or cases will be published in a special issue of

Forensic Science International, while this special issue of *Journal of Chromatography B: biomedical applications* gathers some of the best presentations dealing with analytical techniques applied or applicable to forensic toxicology. Over the last years, the different types of hyphenated analytical techniques (GC–MS, LC–MS and now LC–MS–MS) or innovative sample preparation procedures (e.g. solid-phase micro-extraction), have been increasingly used in forensic toxicology, while even newer techniques, such as capillary electrophoresis, nuclear magnetic resonance or electron spin resonance, are now making their first steps. The range of compounds analysed by these different separative, and for some of them non-separative techniques is also increasing, ranging from vegetal poisons or psychotropic drugs (kavain, *Eschscholtzia Californica* . . .), to manganese or new street drugs, notwithstanding recent or brand new therapeutic drugs presented in this issue. Finally, what makes the difference of forensic toxicology with other applications of analytical chemistry, in addition to the very large range of potentially toxic compounds, is probably the complex and non-reproducible nature of the matrices to analyze, such as gastric content, urine, whole blood, bile, vitreous humour, solid tissues (such as myocardium or brain), etc. Nevertheless, forensic toxicologists have a lively interest in alternative matrices, such as hair or saliva, which can be useful in different situations, e.g. for the detection of compounds in large populations (saliva) or for documenting an intoxication history (hair). For this reason, analytical methods developed for these alternative matrices are presented in this special issue, as well as new developments in general unknown screening procedures, which generally represent the first step of forensic investigations.

On behalf of the organizing committee, we would like to thank: Prof. Robert Wennig, former President of TIAFT as well as the other members of the board for supporting the candidature of France to host this 40th TIAFT meeting; the new President, Dr. Marylin A. Huestis for her encouragements; all the speakers for their valuable contributions; all the attendants for their input during discussions; all the authors and reviewers of the articles, and above all the editors of *Journal of Chromatography B* for giving us the opportunity to prepare this special issue dedicated to forensic toxicology.

Pierre Marquet*, Pascal Kintz¹, on behalf of the organising committee

*Corresponding author. Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University Hospital, 2 avenue Martin-Luther-King, 87042 Limoges cedex, France. Tel.: +33-555-0561-40; fax: +33-555-0461-62.

¹Institut de Médecine Légale, 11 rue Humann, F-67000 Strasbourg, France.

E-mail addresses: marquet@unilim.fr (P. Marquet); pascal.kintz@wanadoo.fr (P. Kintz).