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PREFACE

BIOMEDICAL APPLICATIONS OF WATER-SOLUBLE POLYMERS AND HYDROGELS

The field of water-soluble and water-swellable materials is poised to provide substantial benefits to the medical community. The variety of new materials and the properties reported in this symposium are evidence of that. New hydrogel materials are being reported with great potential for wound healing and drug delivery applications. The development of new materials requires careful structural characterization but it must also go hand in hand with characterization of critical properties such as degradation, viscoelastic response, drug release rates and swelling rates. In addition, new materials are made more useful when they can be prepared in a variety of contexts. In this symposium we have seen the introduction of hydrogels to well-defined surfaces and thin films. Finally, this symposium is notable for its international reach. We have gathered together researchers from Europe, Asia and North America to address the critical issues in this field. This global effort is certainly a sign of the importance of this field today and for the forseeable future.

This was a PMSE symposium co-sponsored by POLY at the 216th ACS National Meeting, held August 23-27, 1998 in Boston, Massachusetts. We had 5 sessions with 30 oral presentations and 22 posters.

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