



Preface

SPECIAL ISSUE

"Synthesis, Testing and Pharmacological Applications of Inhibitors of Lipolytic Enzymes"

More than one thousand articles are published each year on lipases and other lipolytic enzymes. Such great interest is mostly due to their important applications in organic chemistry (hydrolysis, alcoholysis, esterification and transesterification of different substrates) and biotechnology (production of detergents, biopolymers, enantiopure pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, pesticides, flavour compounds, etc.).

In addition, it is known that lipases and phospholipases can play an important role in obesity, atherosclerosis and infectious diseases caused by bacteria and fungi that secrete them as virulence factors like acne (*Propionibacterium acnes*), candidiasis (*Candida albicans*), ulcer (*Helicobacter pylori*), etc. For obesity, tetrahydrolipstatin (Orlistat®), a drug capable of reducing fat digestion and absorption by inhibiting pancreatic lipase, is already available. Instead, more work is necessary to develop new drugs acting as inhibitors of other lipolytic enzymes.

To discuss these questions, scientists from different disciplines (organic chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, pharmacology and clinical science) and countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain) gathered in Rome in July 2001. This Special Issue, collects their contributions and those of some other researchers of the field. I wish to thank all the authors, the reviewers and the staff of Elsevier Science for making possible its publication.

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