



Preface

Lipases and other lipolytic enzymes have very important applications in organic chemistry (hydrolysis, alcoholysis, esterification and transesterification of different substrates) and biotechnology (production of detergents, biopolymers, enantiopure drugs, agrochemicals, pesticides, flavour compounds, etc.).

Moreover, it is known that lipases and phospholipases can play an important role in obesity, atherosclerosis, psoriasis 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, drugs capable of reducing fat digestion and absorption by inhibiting pancreatic lipase, are already available but more work is necessary to develop new drugs acting as inhibitors of other lipolytic enzymes.

To discuss these questions, scientists from different disciplines and countries gathered in Rome in July 2001 (this journal vol. 22 (no. 5/6) 2003) and in July 2003 (this issue).

This Special Issue (Synthesis, testing and pharmacological applications of inhibitors of lipolytic enzymes) contains the contributions from some of the speakers of the July 2003 meeting and from 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.

Guest Editor
Luciano Saso*

Department of Human Physiology and Pharmacology
“Vittorio Erispamer”, University of Rome “La Sapienza”,
P.le Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Rome, Italy

* Fax: +39 06 49912481.

E-mail address: luciano.saso@uniroma1.it
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