

## Editorial

The essential concept of this Symposium on "Biomolecules — Analytical Options", held in the splendid Colosseum Conference Suite of the Star Hotel, Sollentuna, is aptly summarized in the subtitle as "a comparative evaluation of biological and chemical methods for the quality control of biomolecules used as drugs". The wide range of topics compressed into just over 2 days were handled in four sessions of invited lectures covering Techniques, Ethics, Applications and Future Trends. A Panel Discussion and a small, high quality Poster Session served as focal points for the active exchange of views by the 110 delegates attending.

This Symposium was the 25th in a distinguished series of successful meetings organized by the Swedish Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. The Organizing Committee, chaired by Professor Jörgen Vessman, is to be congratulated on attracting some of the outstanding international experts in this complex and rapidly moving field. This special Symposium issue presents 16 of the 24 invited papers discussed at Sollentuna, together with a report on the Panel Discussion. This was chaired by Dr Derek Calam, who kindly stepped in after the tragic loss of Dr C.A. Johnson 2 days earlier — marked by delegates in silent tribute at the start of the Symposium, honouring the memory of one of the principal architects of this meeting.

Many of the papers focussed on the complementarity of biological and physico-chemical assay methods and their applications across the broad range of biomolecules, produced increasingly by chemical synthesis or by recombinant DNA techniques. In his concluding remarks Professor Ingvar Sjöholm noted the increasing use of sensitive and selective physicochemical methods for well characterized molecules, such as insulin and hGH, and emphasized the need to rely on bioassay procedures for validating the production process itself. As reported in the Panel Discussion, it was recognized that pharmacopoeial authorities faced considerable difficulties in establishing appropriate control procedures for biomolecules. There was, however, a discernible shift away from biological methods in the delicate balance of analytical options currently available.

Indeed, such is the pace of change in the field of biotechnology, that it is to be hoped that the Swedish Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences will follow what was acknowledged as a Symposium of outstanding quality, by organizing a further meeting on this theme within the next few years.

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