

# INTRODUCTION

The World Uveitis Symposium held in Guarujá represents the culmination of several years of preparation. For someone who has had the opportunity to witness the changes that have occurred in the field of Ocular Inflammatory Diseases over these past years, the progress has been most impressive. The symposium embodies several trends that I feel are important for the continued development of this subspecialty. It was not too long ago that physicians devoted only to the immediate care of uveitis patients would have attended this type of meeting. While the ultimate goal of all of us is the improved, more effective treatment of patients stricken with ocular inflammatory diseases, it is clear that those with basic science backgrounds must participate in order to reach that ideal. Modern immunologic evaluation is recognized as a fundamental way to study these patients. Some might argue that the role of the clinician is eclipsed by this new methodology. My argument to those is that indeed their role has even increased in importance. If anything, it is their observations that will guide the basic researcher. Only by the close collaboration of the clinician with the basic researcher can studies in the laboratory be directed towards findings that will ultimately prove useful in the clinic. This meeting reflects that this collaborative effort has already begun and is successful.

Another important trend is the internationalization of medicine. Uveitis investigation is no longer the realm of a few "ivory-tower" scientists, but rather the domain of many throughout the world. This is reflected in the sponsorship of this meeting, the International Uveitis Study Group, the Brazilian Uveitis Society, and the Centro de Estudos Moacyr Alvaro. The very fact that such a meeting has occurred in Brazil certainly reflects this as well. It speaks so highly of the new leaders in this field, such as Rubens Belfort Jr., whose hard work, indefatigable nature, and scientific prowess, has caused ocular immunology to flourish beautifully in the fertile soil of Latin America.

It is a time of change in our field. It is exciting to see the involvement of so many. The reports here will be a solid foundation for the advances that I know will come over the next few years.

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