

Editorial

Glutamate-glutamine homeostasis in the CNS: physiological and pathophysiological aspects

This issue of *Neurochemistry International* is devoted to the publication of the proceedings of a Symposium entitled ‘Glutamate-Glutamine Homeostasis in the CNS: Physiological and Pathophysiological Aspects’ held 19–23 June, 1999 in Wierzba, a recreation and convention Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences located in the woods of Mazurian Lakes in Poland. The symposium was restricted to invitation only, and the speakers formed a multinational group, with representatives from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. As may be concluded from the content of the issue, the lectures exhaustively covered recent research on the general metabolism, metabolic compartmentation between astrocytes and neurons, and a spectrum of physiologic and pathogenic effects of three metabolically interrelated molecules: glutamate — a transmitter at more than 80% of synapses in the mammalian CNS, glutamine which plays the dual role of a major precursor and metabolite of glutamate, and ammonia, which apart from being a CNS metabolite linking glutamate to glutamine, is a neurotoxin implicated in numerous neurologic disorders associated with hyperammonemia. We were particularly honoured to welcome Professor Leif Hertz, a pioneer in the research on the metabolic interactions between astrocytes and neurons, our teacher and friend, who delivered an opening lecture which included both a historical review and an update on the role of astrocytes in glutamate metabolism.

We are most grateful to all who in various ways provided support to the conference and encouragement to the participants. The symposium was sponsored by

Elsevier Science Ltd, and the Polish Academy of Sciences, whose President, Professor Mirosław Mossakowski, honoured us with a cordial, stimulating opening address. We also acknowledge a significant financial contribution of Merz & Co, Frankfurt, Germany. At last but not least, we are convinced the symposium wouldn't have been a success without the superb organizing efforts and everyday assistance of the local organizing committee composed of the staff members of the Medical Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences: Wojciech Hilgier, Monika Dolińska, Małgorzata Zawistowska and Magdalena Zielińska of the Department of Neurotoxicology, and Leonora Bużańska of the Laboratory of Molecular Neuropathology. Special thanks are due to the managers of the Wierzba resort, Mr & Mrs Winiarek and their staff, for having arranged excellent food and accommodation.

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