
Preface

The 47th Montagna Annual Symposium on the Biology of Skin was held in Snowmass Colorado on August 19–23, 1998 to develop the topic “Photobiology: The Molecular Mechanisms of Light-Induced Damage and the Effects of Light on Human Skin Diseases.” The purpose of this symposium each year is to bring together basic scientists from disparate fields with cutaneous biologists to consider a topic of great relevance to the biology of the skin in health and disease. The meeting format combines formal presentations, poster presentations, and discussions and informal discussions during 4 d of meeting and leisure activities. Twenty-two speakers and 12 posters presenters The effect of ultraviolet light on biological systems, and its role in important skin diseases and conditions.

Photobiology is an important topic in several areas of investigative dermatology, and is a topic of great public interest due to recent highly publicized controversies regarding the role of sunscreens in photoprotection against the development of melanoma, and the safety of artificial tanning beds in providing a “safe” tan. The discussion in this symposium ranged from fundamental issues regarding the effects of light on biologic systems, to the role of light in inducing disease, to the reversal of the effects of light in disease. The first speakers reviewed the biochemistry and molecular and cellular biology of the effects of light on DNA and other cellular targets, the repair of UV-induced damage, and the outcome of light damage on cell survival. The molecular control of pigmentation was examined next. Two groups of speakers then contrasted photocarcinogenesis and melanomagenesis. Photoimmunology was reviewed with emphasis on the molecular mechanisms of photo-immunosuppression and its reversal by sunscreens. In a section on photomedicine, the role of light was reviewed in several diseases: lupus erythematosus, HIV infection, vitiligo, psoriasis, and graft *versus* host disease. The efficacy of sunscreens in photoprotection was reviewed in a point/counterpoint debate and panel

discussion. Finally, the attendees at the meeting met and provided a short consensus statement to be used to initiate discussion at a consensus conference sponsored by the National Institutes of Health to be held 1 mo following the Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin. This year’s Symposium was held immediately following the 8th Annual Meeting of the Pan American Society for Pigment Cell Research at the same venue. The topics of the two meetings were coordinated so that certain speakers could also participate in the pigment cell scientists’ meeting. This provided an excellent opportunity for participants in these closely related research areas to benefit from material related to pigmentation, photobiology, and melanoma presented at both meetings. It provided an opportunity to advance a major purpose of the SBS: to promote communication and collaboration among scientists whose work relates to cutaneous biology and investigative dermatology. The success of the Symposium and the published proceedings depends on the efforts of the organizing committee, on the staff assisting the Cutaneous Biology Foundation, and on the editorial staff of the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* who review the manuscripts. We greatly appreciate the 33 y of support of this conference by the National Institutes of Health and the current support from the National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, and also value the continued support of biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies and the support of foundations devoted to the study of cutaneous biology and disease.

The 1999 program on the Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin focussed on “Endothelial Cell Biology and Angiogenesis in Health and Disease” and was held on August 7–11, 1999 in Snowmass, Colorado.

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