PERINATOLOGY
Preface

Three factors give the 26th Nestlé Workshop held in Berlin special significance, one of which has particular personal importance.

First, Berlin is regarded by various perinatologists as the cradle of modern perinatal medicine, or, to put it more correctly, of prenatal medicine. It was here in 1960 that the initial steps were taken in fetal blood analysis (1), enabling the first direct diagnostic approach to the human fetus, which, apart from primitive auscultation of the fetal heart, was not possible up to that time. Other important events in Berlin were the founding of the first national society of perinatal medicine in 1967, and a year later the first international association of perinatal medicine, the European Association. These facts provide a historical logic as to why a Nestlé Workshop specifically about perinatology should take place in Berlin.

The second factor was not in existence when the meeting was originally planned but has emerged as a result of the recent political upheavals. Following the political breakdown in eastern Europe, Berlin has become a center of action, and since the Wall was opened, it has been a world-wide symbol of peaceful revolution for freedom.

The third factor is a personal one. This is the last important international scientific meeting that I conducted during my official professional career, for I shall retire from my academic post this year. However, I intend to remain scientifically active in the institute that I have built up, though with the status of an emeritus.

The large field of prenatal medicine—an important part of perinatal medicine—has only emerged during the last 30 years. I enjoy comparing its exceptional progress in obstetric history with the concurrent advances in space exploration. In a way previously unthinkable, we have gained medical access to our own small cosmic space, the human "breeding space."

Within the framework of this workshop we shall be dealing with a few selected topics taken from this huge new field that touches many other medical disciplines. Sadly, even rapid progress soon becomes a matter of routine. Thus, it is important for us to remember that we, the generation alive today, are direct witnesses to a remarkable epoch that contained so many achievements in perinatal medicine.

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REFERENCE

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to all those who have participated in this workshop. My special thanks are extended to the Nestlé Company, in particular to Dr. Pierre Guesry and Dr. Laila Dufour from Vevey, Switzerland, and to Mr. Betz, Mr. Hoffmann, and Mr. Lutz from Frankfurt and Munich, for having chosen Berlin as the venue for the 26th Workshop.
Foreword

Perinatalogy was chosen as the subject for the 26th Nestlé Nutrition Workshop for "historical" reasons, because 22 years ago the Nestlé Company sponsored the first European Congress of Perinatal Medicine, at the time when this new medical branch—linking obstetrics and pediatrics—first appeared. In 1968 the president of that Congress was Professor Erich Saling, one of the pioneers of fetal examination during the prenatal period, and he is the chairman of this workshop.

Since then far greater progress has been made than could ever have been imagined at the onset, and progress continues today. A few key subjects were selected, because of either their great importance or their innovative aspect.

We have not limited ourselves strictly to the "perinatal" period as originally defined, partly because some fetal exploratory techniques must be carried out at an early stage of gestation, and partly because embryonic and early fetal diagnostic techniques are among the most important recent developments.

Our aim is to present advances in this field, contributed by experts from all over the world, knowing that a greater understanding of technical progress by multi-disciplinary teams is indispensable (to enable them to give better care to the child and better advice and help to the family). A more complete title of the seminar and this volume would be "Prenatal and Perinatal Medicine: Progress and Future Outlook; Selected Topics."

We hope that this book contributes to the diffusion of knowledge to all those involved in fetal and neonatal care and also in child care in general, obstetricians, pediatricians, and other specialists, not only because of the data it contains on technical progress but also for the information it gives on the evolution of practical aspects of perinatalogy and on research paths for the future.

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