

TWENTY YEARS OF THE ISL

Research in the basic medical sciences has led to formidable advances in the practice of medicine during the twentieth century. In establishing the International Society of Lymphology (ISL) in 1966, the founding members looked to both basic scientists and clinicians desirous of investigating the lymphatic system in its broadest aspects. Fortunately, this decision to organize was done at a time when new techniques were enabling lymphologists to apply their skills to elucidate some of the underlying mechanisms of disease processes. To give but three examples, the treatment of wound shock with protein solutions, which stemmed from World War I earlier in the century, focused attention on the relationship between proteins and lymph formation in the maintenance of fluid balance in the body; in the late 1950's one of the great mysteries of the lymphatic system, the role of the lymphocyte, was clarified; at this time too, the possible implication of the lipoproteins in the etiology of atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease stimulated research into that function of the lymphatic vessels which led so long ago to their discovery, the absorption of fat. The International Society of Lymphology, therefore, was established during an exciting period of research activity in the medical sciences.

In the past twenty years these and many other questions have been discussed at the ten biennial congresses that have been held in many parts of the world. Rapidly advancing technology has continued to provide more sophisticated and more precise methods enabling scientists to undertake some fascinating experiments. These include: intensive studies of the

structures and forces responsible for the movement of fluid and proteins across the various plasma: lymph barriers and for the propulsion of lymph along the larger lymphatic vessels; a new approach to the study of immunology and of transplantation biology which has arisen from new techniques applied to the physiology of the lymphocyte; and studies of the structure and function of the chylomicron and of the lipoproteins leading to intense activity in the whole field of lipid metabolism, especially in its relation to coronary heart disease. These are but a few of the areas of medicine in which the basic scientific skills of the lymphologist have aided investigations and in which the International Society of Lymphology and its official journal, *Lymphology*, have served as a forum for the discussion of new ideas and new techniques for the study of lymph, the lymphocyte, and the lymphatic vessels, in an attempt to advance our understanding of disease mechanisms.

What of the future? Twenty years is not a very long time in the history of medicine. Yet it is long enough in this technological era to show that new concepts and new scientific techniques are continually being developed, and undoubtedly will continue to be developed in the future since in a free society man's inquisitive desire to unravel the secrets of nature will never be satisfied. As an international multidisciplinary society, the ISL continues to have an important role to play, especially in integrating the many activities of all those working on the many different functions of the lymphatic system.

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ISL President and Editor's Note

The March, 1987 issue of *Lymphology* features papers and other activities of ISL members and affiliated groups throughout the world. The past year and a half has seen a spurt in the ISL memberships rolls, expansion of the participating disciplines, and numerous satellite symposia in basic and clinical lymphology with several scheduled within the next 6 months, including the 11th International Congress of Lymphology with its satellite symposium on "AIDS, Kaposi's Sarcoma, and the Lymphatic System." At the same time, national and regional chapters and societies have arisen or grown forging closer links to the ISL. Included in

this issue are abstracts and papers presented at the North American Society of Lymphology meetings in October, 1986 along with other contributions from NASL officers and members. This issue (vide supra) and the next several will also feature 20th anniversary tributes to the ISL and *Lymphology* from past and current ISL leaders and pioneers.

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