

# PREFACE

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In *Human Growth Hormone: Research and Clinical Practice*, we have been fortunate to be able to convince many of the leaders in the field to write about the recent developments in the understanding of basic and clinical research in the field of human growth hormone. During the last few years, there have been major advances in this field, one that has been dramatically enhanced by the discovery of the growth hormone-releasing peptide. This spawned much novel research, and ultimately led to the cloning of the receptor for the growth hormone secretagogues. The understanding of the molecular biology, structure, and function of growth hormone and the growth hormone receptor complex has also set a new standard in the understanding of the structural biology of cell signaling.

Growth hormone secretagogues and GHRH offer new possibilities for the treatment of growth hormone deficiency states. Growth hormone has an important role, not only in stimulating growth, but also in the control of metabolism. With the major recent advance in understanding the molecular mechanisms of the growth hormone axis, it is now possible to identify molecular defects in the axis.

It is our intention that *Human Growth Hormone: Research and Clinical Practice* should serve as an up-to-date summary of the field and should be of benefit both to the basic and clinical researchers as well as clinical endocrinologists who are now beginning to use growth hormone, not only in growth hormone-deficient states in childhood, but in the adult and also for dealing with metabolic derangements associated with catabolic disease.

***Roy G. Smith***