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# Preface

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The entry of the 21st century has been accompanied by a continuing surge of interest in brain science that began with the “Decade of the Brain” initiative. The laboratory research and clinical practice that followed have contributed to a realignment of perspectives, an integration of theory and thought, and the establishment of numerous multidisciplinary collaborations. Nutrition has begun to be recognized for its pharmacological relevance and stress phenomena are no longer viewed simply as mental health constructs. The study and treatment of health and illness has become the province of a broad segment of scientists and clinicians that includes psychologists, immunologists, biochemists, and public health professionals along with physician specialists from medicine. Even a cursory scanning of the published literature reveals the vast terrain that such enterprises represent. Journals, edited volumes, and monograph publications from almost all related disciplines can be expected to report on developments that cross the once familiar disciplinary boundaries. Investigations of nutrition, behavior, and health—in all their combinations—are now more the rule than the exception. For whatever reasons this has come to be, it has taken hold. The implications for research direction inherent in such activities, and especially the potential for interventions and treatments of many serious health conditions, are profound and are attracting the attention of the entire community of health science and delivery.

In *Nutrients, Stress, and Medical Disorders* we have assembled a sampling of the issues and findings that are representative of much of the current theoretical and laboratory activity. The volume is addressed to professionals and graduate students from diverse areas, for whom the need to become better informed about concepts and methodologies from neighboring disciplines is not readily solved by the specialized scientific literature. We have attempted to provide a wide-ranging collection of chapters by established experts that will provide a useful introduction to the literature of each of the areas of stress, nutrition, and medical disorders. In doing so, we have left it to the individual reader to attempt the global integration of the various messages that are presented, and to extract the salient features that will allow extensions for future scientific investigations or clinical applications. We are most appreciative of the valuable support of Humana Press in bringing this work to publication. We are especially grateful to Paul Dolgert, Editorial Director and to Andrianne Bendich, Series Editor for their expertise and patience in working with us on this project, as well as the earlier volumes that we have prepared. Although we were not able to include all of the relevant topics nor include chapters by all of the available experts, it is our hope that the efforts of the respective authors will merit a favorable reception by the audience of those who are advancing our knowledge in each of these areas—nutrition, stress, and health—so that our boundaries of scientific knowledge will be extended and that the quality of human life will be improved.

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