

## PREFACE

Our understanding of the biology of papillomaviruses has increased dramatically over the past 25 years. Before then, the lack of a facile tissue culture system had left this virus family behind the other “DNA tumor viruses,” such as SV40 and murine polyomavirus. However, with the advent of molecular cloning and other new techniques, coupled with the pivotal stimulus given by connecting HPV infection and cervical cancer, the field has flourished. This progress has culminated in the development of the first true anticancer vaccine, using virus-like particles of the HPV16 and 18 capsid proteins. All investigators in the field should take pride in their contribution to a wonderful scientific journey with such a spectacular humanitarian outcome. Their basic studies, technological innovations, and clinical investigation serve as a model of the positive impact of science in society.

The obvious difficulty in assembling a book about any rapidly moving scientific field is that many observations may be out of date by the time of publication. Given the rate of progress in papillomavirus research, this text may suffer in this regard. However, the release of the HPV vaccine completes a major era, which should be marked by a summary of the work to date. In this summary, we have emphasized the biology of papillomaviruses as well as their clinical importance. Many of the lessons learned have obvious relevance to other viruses and cancers, and they illuminate new pathways to oncogenesis. These lessons stand alongside the vaccine as monuments of progress.

We thank all the contributors to this volume and our other colleagues in the field for their dedication and efforts. The field could not have moved forward so rapidly without such a committed, collaborative, and interactive group of investigators. We hope that the vaccine is not perceived as the end of research into papillomavirus biology, but rather the end of the beginning. We look forward to another 25 years in which new basic science questions are answered, and therapeutic and prophylactic HPV vaccines and other treatment modalities reach everyone in need worldwide.

*Ciao bene*  
Bob Garcea  
Dan DiMaio



The Papillomaviruses

Garcea, R.; DiMaio, D. (Eds.)

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