

Preface

G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs) constitute a large superfamily of proteins that have been historically well represented as drug targets. As such, many of the volumes within *The Receptors* series have focused their attention on receptor subfamilies in the GPCR superfamily (e.g., adrenergic, serotonergic, dopaminergic). While chemokine receptors are relatively young, in terms of the knowledge that has accumulated regarding their roles in physiology and pathology, it is clear that this GPCR subfamily is dwarfing all others with respect to the total number of receptors and their functional diversity. The breadth of the chemokine field was not fully appreciated in the early days of chemokine discovery, when the characterization of these molecules was largely a curiosity of a small set of biologists primarily interested in inflammation. Presently, the field of *chemokiology* is quite diverse, and it is nearly impossible to stay informed on all aspects of chemokine biology. Nonetheless, this book seeks to distill information regarding the molecular and cell biology, physiology, and pathology of chemokines and their receptors into a single volume, providing an excellent resource for those entering the field or the most experienced chemokineologist seeking new insights. In the chapters, leading authorities consider structural and cellular aspects of chemokines and chemokine receptors, and more notably, discuss the roles of these molecules in a variety of disease states that transcend their classically defined role(s) in inflammation. The reader will become acquainted with the functional diversity of these gene families and more importantly, we hope, will grasp the significance of these receptors to researchers in academia and the pharmaceutical industry.

We are grateful to the many experts who have contributed their time and energy to this book. These authors have played significant roles in the early discoveries and continue to expand the knowledge base related to their subfield specialties. Finally, we thank Dr. Kim Neve for the kind invitation to direct this project and the editorial staff for its help in bringing this book to production.

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<http://www.springer.com/978-1-58829-773-0>

The Chemokine Receptors

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2007, XIII, 403 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58829-773-0

A product of Humana Press