

# Preface

## “APLA 2010”

The International Congress on Antiphospholipid Antibodies is held every 3 years to discuss the recent advances and future directions in antiphospholipid syndrome (APS). The 13th International Congress on Antiphospholipid Antibodies (APLA 2010) was hosted in Galveston, TX, USA on April 13–16, 2010. The goal of the chairperson (Dr. Silvia Pierangeli) and the meeting organizers was to make this event a truly international and multispecialty one, and to provide the attendees with the latest evidence-based science on APS. More than 40 invited speakers from different specialties and more than 400 attendees from 28 countries came together for a very comprehensive and thorough program; the congress was accredited and supported by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) as a CME event.

The three-and-half day event included state-of-the-art lectures, “meet the professor” sessions tailored to the interest of junior scientists and clinicians, selected abstract oral presentations, poster sessions, a laboratory wet workshop to evaluate the performance of various diagnostic antiphospholipid antibody (aPL) tests, and preconference “consensus” workshops for the task forces to report and discuss their conclusions. These task forces that were created by the meeting organization committee to review the controversial aspects of APS in an evidence-based manner were:

- Task force on “criteria” aPL tests
- Task force on “non-criteria” aPL tests
- Task force on obstetric APS
- Task force on the management of thrombosis
- Task force on clinical research
- Task force on the brain involvement in APS
- Task force on catastrophic APS and non-criteria aPL manifestations.

Patients were also invited to actively participate in APLA 2010 for the first time in the history of aPL congresses; we are extremely appreciative for the monetary contributions and their volunteer work. Furthermore, 3 patient–doctor forums were

included in the program that were extremely well attended and provided the venue for productive as well as informative discussions between patients and clinicians.

Around the time of “APLA 2010,” Springer contacted us with the idea of editing a new book on “Antiphospholipid Syndrome.” We immediately liked the proposal but we thought the new project should be unique and different from previously published APS books. Although significant progress has been made in the field of APS over the last 25 years, we knew that different opinions, uncertainties, and areas of great discussion still exist. For instance, questions still remain on how aPL is acquired, what factors influence the production of “pathogenic aPL,” or what is the role of inflammation in aPL-mediated clinical problems. We thought that the best way to address unknown and controversial aspects of APS would be to include chapters that address simple questions with complex answers (e.g., what is the origin of aPL) and then letting a team of scientists with different opinions answer these questions. We also decided to invite “APLA 2010” task force members to contribute to the project by presenting (and expanding as needed) their conclusions and recommendations.

The idea seemed initially almost impossible. It was critical for us to produce this book in a relatively short period so that the APLA 2010 “momentum” would not be lost, knowing that this would be an additional challenge to the authors. In order to bring the idea to fruition: (a) we determined “team leaders” for each chapter; (b) we conveyed our goals to the “team leaders” throughout the world (many actively participated at APLA 2010) and thankfully most of them accepted the challenge with enthusiasm; (c) with the guidance of “team leaders,” we invited other contributors to complete this challenging work in a professional and evidence-based manner; and (d) we decided to organize each chapter in an uniform and systematic fashion based on the following sections:

- Introduction
- What is known?
- What is controversial and/or unknown?
- Current research
- Future research directions
- Group conclusions

In addition to the scientific discussions included in the book, we believe that three chapters deserve special attention: a historical perspective of the past 25 years of APS and the preceding 12 International Congresses on Antiphospholipid Antibodies; a future perspective on where the APS field is going; and a very special chapter is dedicated to patients that describes—in lay language—what patients need to know in order to better understand APS.

Hence, after a little bit over a year, we are pleased to introduce the first edition of: “*Antiphospholipid Syndrome: Insights and Highlights from the 13th International Congress on Antiphospholipid Antibodies.*” Needless to say, we are extremely grateful to all the contributors (many of them participated in more than one chapter) and to the staff of Springer for their hard work and enthusiasm. Specifically, we are grateful for the organizational skills of Michael D. Sova from Springer, who managed

to keep us on time and track on this project with his extraordinary organizational skills. We are also thankful to our patients for their unlimited support, enthusiasm, and encouragement to go on with our research and clinical work.

Finally, we do hope that this book will be useful to clinicians who are involved in managing APS patients that can be challenging in many ways, to trainees in various subspecialties of the medical sciences, and to researchers who are intrigued—as much as we are—on a better understanding of this complex and evolving disease. We also hope that our book will guide the researchers and “APLA 2010” task forces; we aim to publish the updated second edition of this book following the next International Congress on aPL, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2013.

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