

Preface

The present volume of *Acta Neurochirurgica Supplement* contains the Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Asian Gamma Knife Academy held on September 29 to October 1, 2011 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. This event was organized by the International Institute of the Biological Systems (St. Petersburg, Russia) and was supported by Elekta Instruments AB (Stockholm, Sweden). It was joined by 70 participants from 19 countries on five continents. The scientific program covered various options for optimal management of brain tumors, vascular lesions, and functional disorders.

There are at least three factors that make this meeting unique. First, it is unusual that a conference of an Asian professional society was organized in a European country. This issue raised multiple questions, but the reason for the decision was, in fact, rather simple. At the time of preparation for the meeting, there was no functioning Gamma Knife facility in the Asian part of the Russian Federation. Thus, it was decided to organize the conference in St. Petersburg, where a young, but already well-established radiosurgical program was in place at the Diagnostic and Treatment Center of the International Institute of the Biological Systems.

Second, the meeting was definitely multidisciplinary, involving not only Gamma Knife users but microneurosurgeons and neuroradiologists, which maintained a good balance between microneurosurgery and radiosurgery, in keeping with the intended design of the conference. The presentation and discussion of information from multiple treatment methods will help provide better service to patients. These objectives were realized through the scientific sessions with the presentation of alternative surgical and radiosurgical treatment options, with open discussions on their advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, an overview of current radiological modalities and their possible application for Gamma Knife treatment planning and subsequent follow-up was offered during the special symposium dedicated to advanced neuroimaging for radiosurgery.

Third, following the traditions of the Asian Gamma Knife Academy meetings, a special workshop was organized on the last day of the conference at the Radiosurgical Center of the International Institute of the Biological Systems. Leading professionals demonstrated real-time dose planning for various brain diseases and shared their opinions on possible solutions to specific practical problems.

The materials included in this volume reflect the scientific program of the meeting. Some articles, specifically highlighting alternative treatment options, are accompanied by editorials prepared by recognized experts in the field. We hope that all of our colleagues worldwide, who are looking for the best possible treatment for their patients, find the presented material scientifically interesting and practically useful.

The Editors

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