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## Preface

In 2010 the Messerli Research Institute was founded as an interdisciplinary enterprise between the private Swiss Messerli Foundation and three universities: the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Medical University Vienna, and University of Vienna. The intention was to investigate and improve all types of human–animal relationships and interactions.

In spite of the fact that human medicine and veterinary medicine share a long history of mutual fertilization, the number of interactions between these disciplines is still insufficient today. To foster the interdisciplinary dialogue for the sake of human and animal patients, the professorship for comparative medicine was embedded into the highly stimulating environment of the Messerli Research Institute.

In this first book, comparative medicine aligns head to head the anatomy and physiology of human and animal organisms to shape a solid basis for the understanding of conserved (or different) principles of life. It gives an outline on historic aspects and new identity of the discipline, as well as an update in juridical and ethical implications in the human–animal interaction.

We hope to enrich your reading with our contribution and thereby to contribute to the interdisciplinary dialogue.

Vienna, Austria

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