
Preface

Cholesterol is a Janus-faced molecule. The very property that makes it useful in cell membranes, namely its absolute insolubility in water, also makes it lethal.

This quote from the 1985 Nobel Laureates Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein (Brown and Goldstein, 1985 *Nobel Lecture*: 284–324) aptly introduces the concept of cholesterol homeostasis. We need cholesterol, but too much cholesterol can be detrimental, even lethal. And so biology’s elegant solution to this conundrum is the intricate, multilayered homeostatic mechanisms that mammals have evolved. Furthermore, the absolute insolubility of cholesterol in water presents special technical challenges to the study of cholesterol homeostasis. This volume of *Methods in Molecular Biology* brings together a compendium of “How-to” guides for many key techniques in tackling the investigation of cholesterol homeostasis.

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