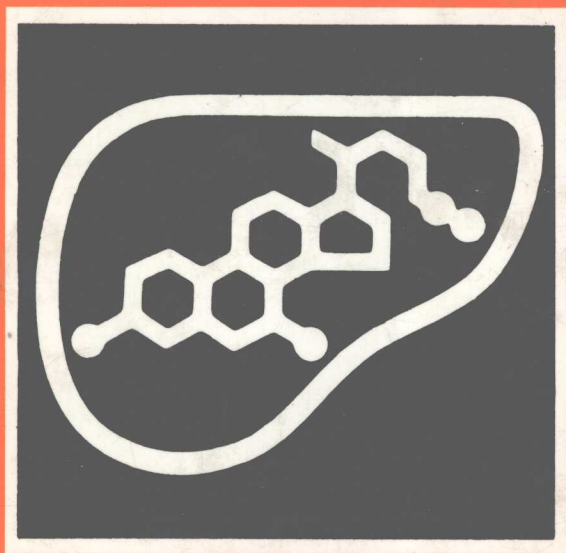


FALK SYMPOSIUM 42

Enterohepatic Circulation of Bile Acids and Sterol Metabolism



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Enterohepatic Circulation of Bile Acids and Sterol Metabolism

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Preface

The bile acids can fulfil their important functions in bile formation, fat absorption and regulation of sterol metabolism only because of their unique physicochemical properties, and because of a system of chemical and physical pumps by which they are moved through the enterohepatic circulation. This book contains the contributions to the Eighth International Bile Acid Meeting which focused on the enterohepatic circulation of bile acids and on the effects of alterations of the enterohepatic circulation on bile acid and cholesterol metabolism. An attempt was made in this meeting to integrate the approach of the biochemist with that of the physiologist and clinician. Accordingly, not only transepithelial transport of bile acids by chemical pumps, but also movement of bile acids by intestinal motility, as well as the effects of disturbances of these events on sterol metabolism have been discussed. Finally, half a day of the meeting was devoted to an update on gallstone disease which is so intimately related to disturbances of bile acid and cholesterol homeostasis.

With the meeting being held in Berne, it is appropriate to remember that the famous Albrecht von Haller of that city was one of the first scientists to perform gallstone analyses. In his book *Elementa Physiologicae*, published 1764, he distinguished between two kinds of gallstone, namely 'concrementa grandia subrotunda' which obviously were cholesterol stones and small black stones which were pigment stones. About hundred years later in 1872 another pioneer of gallstone research, namely Bernhard Naunyn was Chairman of the Department of Medicine in Berne. In a new classification of gallstones he clearly distinguished between cholesterol stones and stones that contained bilirubin and calcium. For treatment of gallstone disease he recommended increasing bile secretion by the administration of salicylates or bile salts. From this early work it is evident that many of the relevant questions about gallstone disease had already been asked by the times of von Haller and Naunyn. More than hundred years later the answers still remain incomplete.

The editors extend their thanks to the contributors who made the 8th International Bile Acid Meeting another success, to Dr Herbert Falk for his generous support of the meeting and to MTP Press Limited for superb co-operation in publishing these proceedings.

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