

International Symposium on the Biology of the Oviduct

La Serena, Chile. September 7-11, 1990

PREFACE

The mammalian oviduct has the usual complexity of biological structures and plays an important role in several steps of the reproductive process. Besides capturing the oocytes released by the follicles at ovulation, it transports the gametes in opposite directions, provides a special cellular and biochemical environment for fertilization and the first stages of pre-implantation development, can act as a transducer or amplifier of zygote signals to the mother and delivers the embryo to the uterus in a timely fashion.

Since technical developments for assisted reproduction spread world-wide after the first successful human IVF-ET, scientists were led to believe that the Fallopian tube was dispensable for human reproduction and interest in this organ almost vanished for a while. However, research persisted in some centers around the world and we felt that it was time to gather older and newer generations of scientists interested in oviductal biology to promote a lively exchange of views and inspire new approaches to assess, understand and manage its functions. The

proposition of holding an international symposium on the Biology of the Mammalian Oviduct was well received and afforded a good opportunity to fulfill a long desired wish to honour Professor Richard J. Blandau for his pioneer work and leadership in the understanding of tubal functions.

We thank the individuals and organizations who contributed funds towards this meeting, in particular the Special Programme in Human Reproduction of the World Health Organization, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Chilean Institute for Reproductive Medicine and the Third World Academy of Sciences for their generous support. Due to budgetary constraints it was not possible to invite all the scientists who are working in this field but we hope that this publication of the invited lectures will reach them and will encourage all of us to continue unveiling the fascinating molecular and cellular interactions that take place in the oviduct.

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Guest Editors

