

# Preface

Schizophrenia remains a mighty challenge to psychiatry, with its causes and underlying brain mechanisms yet to be fully uncovered. Currently available treatments are neither universally effective nor without unwanted effects. These aspects, together with the high prevalence of schizophrenia, its often debilitating nature and associated family/social burden, make this mental disorder one of the most complex public health issues of our times.

The *Advances in Schizophrenia* series intends to become a key reference in this field. Our aim is to provide comprehensive and up-to-date reviews of the wide range of research studies carried out around to world with the purposes of solving the schizophrenia puzzle and providing clues to new forms of treatment and prevention for this disorder.

A special feature of the series is its truly broad scope, virtually encompassing all fields of schizophrenia research: epidemiology and risk factors; psychopathology; diagnostic boundaries; cognition; outcome and prognosis; pathophysiology; genetics; pharmacological and psychological forms of treatment and rehabilitation; community care; and stigma.

The first volume of the series is related to the 6th Symposium on the Search for the Causes of Schizophrenia, held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in February 2009. We have been organizing the Search-Meetings since 1986. During these 22 years we have managed to keep the main characteristic of this series: the “Search” remains a non-commercial meeting, with a limited number of invited guest speakers and participants. A group of prominent scientists from different centers around the world were invited to provide scholar reviews on the state of the art in each of the above areas, as well as their view on the perspectives for the future. The content table of this book reflects the program of the 6th edition of this meeting and is consistent with our aim to comprehensively cover all relevant areas of research into schizophrenia.

Of the five previous meetings we organized with our friend Heinz Haefner, three took place in Heidelberg and the last two in Brazil. These meetings resulted in five books, edited by Heinz and one of us (WFG) and published by Springer. In this 6th Search, for personal reasons, Heinz could not participate in the preparations of the meeting and in the edition of this book. Nevertheless, we thought that this would be an excellent occasion to dedicate this 6th Search and the first volume of this *Advances in Schizophrenia* series to Heinz Haefner. We feel that Heinz Haefner

deserves this homage as one of the most influential psychiatrists of our time, who has given important contributions to both the knowledge about schizophrenia and the care of its sufferers.

In a time of global economic crisis we are indebted to those companies that, in spite of sensitive reductions in their budgets, have given us the financial support for the meeting, which resulted in the production of this book. Therefore, in our name and if we may, in the name of all participants of the 6th Search and authors of this book, we would like to thank, indeed, the unrestricted educational grants provided by Janssen-Cilag, Eli Lilly, and Astra Zeneca.

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