

FOREWORD

This issue of the Journal contains papers presented by speakers invited to the 10th CRI Symposium held on May 18 and 19, 2001 at the Cancer Research Institute of the Seoul National University College of Medicine, Seoul, Korea. The title of the symposium was "Cyclooxygenase-2, a Molecular Target for Cancer Prevention."

Over the last decade, there has been an expanding body of evidence from epidemiologic and laboratory studies supporting the observation that cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) plays a role in the development and progression of cancer as well as in inflammation. Inappropriate upregulation of COX-2 and abnormally elevated levels of certain prostaglandins have been frequently observed in various types of human cancer. Overexpression of COX-2 is sufficient to cause tumorigenesis in experimental animals and renders previously transformed cells resistant to apoptotic death. The proposition that COX-2 is causally linked to cancer provides the rationale for the possible use of COX-2 inhibitors as chemopreventive agents. In line with this notion, epidemiologic studies have revealed a reduced risk of developing colorectal, gastric, esophageal, and mammary cancer in individuals who regularly take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), including aspirin and sulindac. It is of interest to note that NSAIDs are also protective against the formation of tumors in experimental animals. The recently developed selective COX-2 inhibitors, such as celecoxib and rofecoxib, have been subjected to chemoprevention trials in high-risk groups, including patients with familial adenomatous polyposis, and the results are quite promising.

Progress made in our understanding of the functional roles of COX-2 and its products in cell proliferation/death, angiogenesis, tumor promotion, and progression demanded that the organizers broaden the horizons of the symposium to cover various aspects of this particular enzyme in carcinogenesis and chemoprevention. The symposium was very informative, presenting cutting-edge research findings from leading experts in the related fields.

We were fortunate to have held this 2-day symposium in a brand-new cancer research building donated by Samsung Electronics to the Cancer Research Institute of the Seoul National University. The symposium was generously supported by the BK21 Project for Medicine, Dentistry, of the Seoul National University and by Pharmacia-Korea.

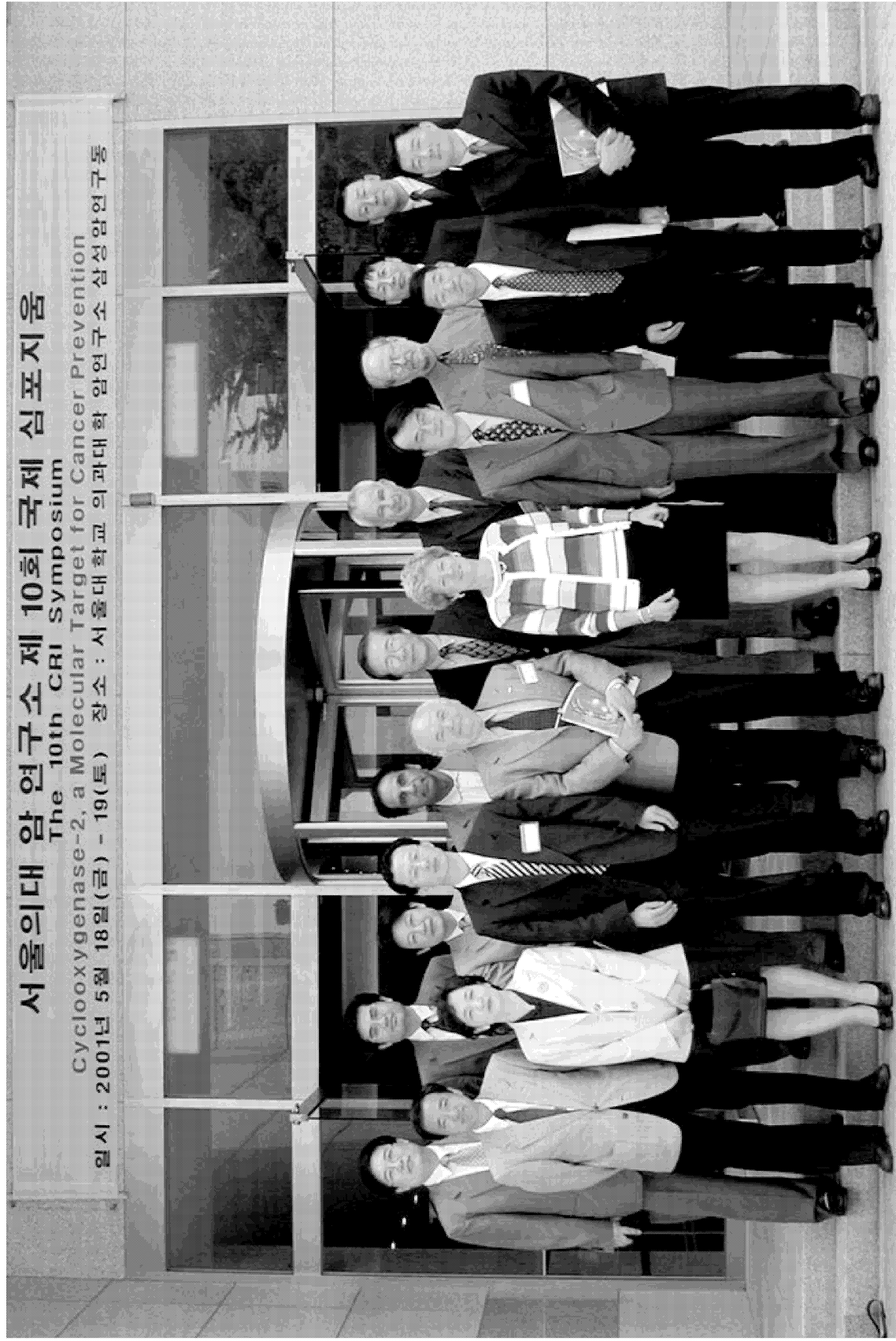
As co-organizers of the above symposium, we would like to express our appreciation to the Organizing Committee members, especially Professor Yong-Sung Juhn, Dr. Myeong-Jin Nam, and Professor Woo-Ho Kim. Special thanks are also extended to all the speakers and poster presenters; their contributions made possible the high standard of the scientific program.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Professor Edgar Moran, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Environmental Pathology, Toxicology and Oncology*, for having kindly arranged a special issue as a vehicle for publication of the symposium proceedings. We were honored by his participation as a guest speaker at the symposium.

Guest Editors:

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Young-Joon Surh, Ph.D.
Professor
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Organizers and some of the participants at the 10th CRI Symposium on Cyclooxygenase 2, a Molecular Target for Cancer Prevention, at the Cancer Research Institute of the Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea, May 18 & 19, 2001.

Front: Takashi Takahashi, Hyeyoung Kim, Young-Joon Surh, Edgar M. Moran, Susan M. Fischer, Yung-Jue Bang, Myeong-jin Nam, Dae-Yong Kim
Rear: Ki-Baik Hahm, Myung-Whun Sung, Toshihiko Kawamori, Bandaru S. Reddy, Daniel H. Hwang, Bernhard Brüne, Andrew Butler, Yong-Sung Juhn, Yong-Sang Song