

Foreword

On behalf of the *Sociedad Española de Enfermedad Celíaca* (SEEC, “Spanish Society for Celiac Disease”), it pleases me to welcome this book with which this Society shares a forward-looking vision that rests upon the pillars of education and the spreading of knowledge about this disease. As set down in its statutes, among SEEC’s main objectives are to “Deepen the global knowledge on celiac disease, into its biological bases as well as into its clinical, diagnostic, and therapeutic aspects and its prevention”, and also to “Promote the exchange of ideas among all professionals interested in the study of celiac disease”.

The publishing of this volume is based on the amplitude and relevance of the subjects dealt with herein, which have been written by clinical specialists, researchers and teachers, many of whom are members of SEEC. Celiac disease has always been of interest for biomedical research as a model of the study of the interaction between factors that arise from the environment (specially the gluten from cereals) and genetics (HLA and genes that regulate the immune response), with the intestine as its main target organ and the immune system as mediator of inflammation and tissue damage. In recent years, significant breakthroughs in many of these aspects have been described, opening up new lines of enquiry and posing many questions to be solved.

The estimated prevalence data highlight the large number of undiagnosed cases along with the identification of cases on a scale that constantly grows worldwide. In the light of the acquired knowledge on its pathogenesis, its wide variety of clinical presentations still remain to be explained, not to mention the integration of the entire spectrum of pathological and immunological findings to the disease’s definition and understanding the functional meaning of the new genetic variants. The development of serological and genetic markers has prompted the revision of the diagnostic criteria, leading to the establishment of practical protocols for each population under study, paying special attention to patients with atypical forms of expression.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work that Dr. Luis Rodrigo and Dr. Amado Salvador Peña have done as editors on starting and carrying out this project, which was first published in Spanish in 2013 and now is being brought forth in English thanks to the enthusiastic and disinterested translation skills of the group of Carlos Beirute L. and Amavilia Perez V. of the *Centro de Información de la Enfermedad Celíaca* (CIEC), “Celiac Disease Information Center”.

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