Introduction for National Cholesterol Month

Edward A. Fisher

In this issue of Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology, there is a special collection of articles in recognition of National Cholesterol Month. As Brown and Goldstein noted in 1985 in their Nobel Prize lecture, “Cholesterol is the most highly decorated small molecule in biology. Thirteen Nobel Prizes have been awarded to scientists who devoted major parts of their careers to cholesterol. Ever since it was first isolated from gallstones in 1784, almost exactly 200 years ago, cholesterol has exerted a hypnotic fascination for scientists from the most diverse domains of science and medicine.”

The authors and readers of Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology remain fascinated by cholesterol, and the range of “domains” remains diverse. The articles in this issue span a wide range of topics, including the effects of oxidized low-density lipoprotein on signal transduction in endothelial cells, a number of contributors to macrophage foam cell formation, and cholesterol crystallization and plaque rupture.

The long tradition of research on cholesterol has led to fundamental discoveries about a two-faced molecule: not only is it essential to life, but its excess in the vasculature underlies the major cause of death in the developed world. Progress in understanding both faces will come from continued research.

From New York University School of Medicine, New York.
Correspondence to Edward A. Fisher, Smilow 7, NYU School of Medicine, 522 First Ave., New York, NY 10016. E-mail edward.fisher@nyumc.org

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efforts, such as those represented in this issue, and we hope that this “small molecule” will be decorated many times over in the years to come, reflecting further major advances in our understanding of its role in macrovascular disease.

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None.

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