

Preface

This volume of the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* contains the proceedings of the fifth conference on circulating nucleic acids. This meeting (CNAPS-V) marked the 10th anniversary of the inaugural symposium on Circulating Nucleic Acids in Plasma and Serum (CNAPS-I) and is based on active research in this field that has grown considerably since the discovery of circulating DNA in the late 1940s. The meeting was held in Moscow from August 23–27, 2007; earlier meetings were held in Menthon-St. Bernard, France; Hong Kong; Santa Monica, California; and London.

Recent progress in this field forms the basis of this volume, which includes chapters on developing protocols for nucleic acid extraction and analysis, the origin of circulating nucleic acids, the capacity of these nucleic acids to enter cells and exhibit biological activity, isolating and testing fetal nucleic acids from maternal blood and their clinical relevance, and discussion of the clinical implications of circulating DNA from cancer patients and those suffering from other disorders. Protocols for nucleic acid extraction and analysis developed here will help to further answer questions concerning the origin of the circulating nucleic acids, the mechanisms for nucleic acid entry into cells and tissues, as well as consistency in the methodology for clinical application.

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