An International Atherosclerosis Society Symposium on Dyslipidemia was held on 16 May 2013 as a Keynote Session of the First International Cardiology Symposium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This IAS Symposium featured a morning with four lectures on subjects of high topical interest and importance, followed by an afternoon of interactive discussion and questions involving the speakers and the audience. Overall, it was a stimulating day that I hope will be replicated in many future meetings.

The lectures during the morning session highlighted the alarming increase in prevalence of the metabolic syndrome and its associated dyslipidemia and cardiovascular risk in the Middle East and North African Region and proposed some practical approaches to both prevention and treatment. The lecture on LDL highlighted the effective treatments that are already available to reduce the levels of LDL-C and presented compelling evidence that a reduction in level of LDL-C translates into a reduction in cardiovascular risk. However, it was also emphasized that many high risk people continue to have levels of LDL-C that are undesirably high and that much work needs to be done to ensure that existing therapies are used long term and at doses required to achieve recommended goals. This lecture also provided an update on some exciting new LDL lowering therapies that are in current development. And the final lecture of the morning addressed the issue of HDL-C as a marker of cardiovascular risk and discussed HDL as a potential therapeutic target to reduce risk. However, it was concluded that the HDL fraction is extremely complex and that there is much that we do not yet understand. It was emphasized that much more research is needed before it will be known whether or not HDL should be considered as a therapeutic target.

Perhaps the most stimulating and exciting part of the day was the vigorous discussion during the afternoon. Questions and discussion were wide ranging and involved both the speakers and the audience. The level of knowledge displayed by many in the audience was impressive and contributed to a day that all present appeared to find both interesting and valuable. A comment made to me by one of the delegates as we left the hall at 5pm impressed me: he simply asked whether it was possible to extend the session by another hour. That was a clear message to me that the day had been a success.

I wish to thank the organizers of the International Cardiology Symposium for the opportunity to mount this IAS Symposium. I would like to thank Khalid Al Rasadi (Oman), Raul Santos (Brazil) and Juan Badimon (USA) not only for their excellent lectures but also for their enthusiastic participation in the questions and discussion during the afternoon. And I must say a special thank-you to those in the audience whose questions, comments, and answers contributed so much to what was a highly successful day.