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Preface

An intact sense of smell and taste allows us to recognize the chemical signals from our environment. By doing this, the chemical senses contribute significantly to the quality of our lives. Despite this fact, and although chemosensory disorders are frequent, they have been ‘neglected’ in clinical routine for many years. This neglect may be partly explained by traditional difficulties in the diagnosis of chemosensory disorders and the common belief that chemosensory disorders cannot be treated. Having said that, the clinical neglect of chemosensory functions is in sharp contrast to the remarkable interest the chemical senses have received over the last decade, culminating in the 2004 Nobel Prize awarded to two researchers in the sense of smell.

This publication is meant for the clinician confronted with chemosensory disorders. It is supposed to bridge the gap between clinical and basic research. Above all, it is meant to provide an update in this area of research, presented by most distinguished researchers in the field. We do hope that this book will be used by many clinicians in order to improve counselling and treatment of patients with chemosensory dysfunction. Above and beyond this, we would be more than delighted if this book inspires clinical colleagues to perform basic research on the chemical senses where many questions are still open.

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