

Kidney International, Vol. 39 (1991), p. 369

Introduction

While renal physiologists have always recognized that the tubular handling of solute is an essential element in the physiologic control of homeostasis by the kidney, much less emphasis has been placed historically on the nature of tubulointerstitial structures, their cell biology, and response to inflammation, injury, or disease. I believe this is because physician scientists have had much greater difficulty in conceptually relating tubular damage with renal failure. While it is an arguable point, morphometrists have known for some time that a structural deterioration of the interstitium correlates better with loss of

renal function than does change confined solely to the glomerular tuft. Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the biology of the interstitium. This burgeoning research has served consequently as the inspiration for our monograph. I thank Dr. Andreoli for suggesting we undertake this project, and I am appreciative of the many fine contributions made by the authors of these gathered papers. While it is not possible to cover all things comprehensively, it is clear that the tubulointerstitium is richly interesting, and I look forward to future installments as the field moves forward.

Received for publication September 10, 1990

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