LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The 2008 Education Supplement on Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness …
Charles Dickens – A Tale of Two Cities (1859)

This (admittedly somewhat worn-out) quote came to mind while perusing the contributions included in the 2008 Educational Supplement on Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation, which accompanies the 2008 BMT Tandem Meetings of the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR) and the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation.

The twenty chapters cover a variety of topics in hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, demonstrating the strong underpinning of clinical strategies by basic research, and the integration of the latest research in diverse areas ranging from immunotherapy to regenerative medicine. The chapters are written by a diverse group of experts and cover recent advances in the biology and clinical use of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, including immunology (graft-versus-leukemia, memory T cells, immune reconstitution, T cell therapy, immunotherapy, vaccination), particular diseases (amyloidosis, mantle cell lymphoma, T cell lymphoma, large cell lymphoma, acute leukemia, pediatric cancers, SCID), (cancer) stem cell biology (cancer stem cells), clinical trials (CIBMTR/EBMT key studies), transplant-related complications (chronic GVHD, graft failure, late effects, kidney disease, oral disease), umbilical cord blood transplantation, pharmacogenomics, mouse models, regenerative medicine, and alternative donor sources.

After reading these chapters, I am sure that the reader will agree that it is truly the best of times in transplant medicine, which is well positioned to take advantage of the exciting progress in stem cell biology, cancer biology, oncology, immunotherapy, regenerative medicine and other disciplines to design curative therapies for patients with life-threatening diseases. And although the current crisis in NIH funding and the political hurdles for stem cell research might feel like the worst of times, this collection of contributions from basic and clinical scientists is a testimony of the vitality and great promise of our field.

I want to thank all the authors and editors for their contributions and, in particular, Alan Leahigh and Robert Krawisz, who organized and produced this Educational Supplement.

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