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Preface

Cancer is the most frightening disease of our time and an important cause of death in children and older adults. It is clearly of cellular origin and characterised by uncontrolled growth. Even if knowledge about cancer has increased tremendously during the last years, we still do not know what cancer is in any precise molecular terms.

This book should inform about the complexity of the phenomenon of cancer, and also about interests and state of knowledge in various disciplines of Swiss Oncological Research, without any claim to reflect its complete spectrum. It presents the contributions to a Symposium on the Nature of Cancer held on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences in Basel on October 7th, 1982. In order to make it available to a larger public, it is published in English.

In the preparation of this volume special thanks go to the contributing authors for their high quality reports. We are also grateful for the editorial assistance by the general secretariat of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences and by the Birkhäuser Verlag Basel. Sincere thanks go to the president of the meeting, Professor Iris Zschokke-Gränacher, and her organising committee, who did so much to make the meeting a success.

January 1983

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