New Drugs in the Past and New Drugs in the Future

...promoting the science and technology of controlled release. CRS will be holding its 29th annual meeting in Seoul, Korea, between 20–25 July 2002. The mini-symposium is divided into disease-based drug delivery, such as drug delivery for cardiovascular disease treatment, for neoplastic disease treatment and for diabetic disease. The scientific sessions are classified into biomaterials for drug delivery, biomimetic polymers for drug delivery, chemical characterisation and imaging of drug delivery, drug delivery in osteogenesis, intracellular trafficking, particulate drug carriers and PEGylated protein drugs, tissue engineering and therapeutic gene/oligonucleotide delivery. The three plenary speakers at the Seoul meeting will present lectures on the most timely topics relevant to drug delivery, for example microarray analysis of mechanically induced gene expression in vascular cells, new concepts of cell biology, polymer gel phase transition as a central mechanism in biology, and gene delivery research as a clinically useful tool. The members of the CRS have been working on developing new drug delivery technologies to bring concept into reality for various types of drugs.

Drug delivery technologies have been developed over the last three decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, the urgent needs were to develop zero-order release drug delivery systems and systems that allow exact control, or at least understanding, of the release kinetics from dosage forms. Research in the 1990s produced the ability to achieve modulated drug delivery using so-called smart polymers and hydrogels. In addition, delivery systems for protein drugs and genes began to emerge.

What the future will bring in drug delivery technology is anybody’s guess, but, if history is any guide, we can assume that, in less than a decade, the challenges will be overcome. To reach that point, it is important for drug delivery scientists to congregate once a year to present their works, exchange ideas and explore different concepts. This year, Seoul will provide such a forum not only for CRS members, but for all scientists working in the pharmaceutical field. I look forward to seeing you in Seoul in July.