

Introduction: Antipyretic Therapy

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Although physicians have used various forms of therapy since antiquity to lower the temperature of febrile patients, it is still not certain whether the benefits of antipyretic therapy outweigh its risks. It is not known, for example, if core temperatures encountered during the febrile state ever reach levels that are intrinsically noxious (and therefore merit antipyretic intervention) or when, if ever, fever's metabolic costs exceed its physiologic benefits. Nor is it known if the benefits of available forms of antipyretic therapy consistently outweigh their clinical costs.

The articles in this supplement to *Clinical Infectious Diseases* consider the current state of knowledge about fever and its treatment. They describe the work and reflections of some of the world's leading experts in thermophysiology, fever, and antipyresis (figure 1), who met on Parsons Island in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay in August 1999 to share ideas and to produce this first-ever comprehensive review of antipyretic therapy. Together, the articles provide a panoramic view of the evolution of knowledge to its present form, as well as a glimpse at what the future might hold for progress in this important clinical area.



Figure 1. Symposium participants. From left to right: G. Forrest, T. Simmons, D. Simmons, J. Tatro, J. van der Meer, R. Botting, P. Axelrod, A. Romanovsky, D. Gengenbach, J. Botting, S. Axelrod, B. Gengenbach, A. Amorso, Y. Blatteis, P. Sehdev, C. Blatteis, C. Cooper, J. Boulant, K. Hughes, C. Boulant, P. Mackowiak, K. Plaisance, C. Mackowiak, and S. Cimafranca.

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