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Foreword

From 15 to 18 November, 2012, 49 experts in the field of childhood epilepsy convened in The Hague, The Netherlands, for a workshop entitled: *Outcome of Childhood Epilepsies*. The workshop was held within the framework of the “Progress in Epileptic Disorders” workshops, organized by the journal *Epileptic Disorders*. The 2012 workshop was held in The Hague on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Dutch Study of Epilepsy in Childhood, and the members of the Dutch study group felt indeed very honoured to host so many distinguished guests.

The Dutch Study of Epilepsy in Childhood (DSEC) started in 1987 as a prospective cohort study of children with newly diagnosed epilepsy. The children were recruited from four hospitals in three adjacent cities in The Netherlands and the almost 500 children recruited over a period of four years were considered to contain roughly 70–80% of all incident cases in the referral area of the participating hospitals.

The original study group consisted—in alphabetical order—of Willem Arts, Oebele Brouwer, Ada Geerts, Boudewijn Peters, Hans Stroink and Cees Van Donselaar, and, sticking together as a group despite changes in the respective careers, we were able to continue the follow-up of the cohort until quite recently. Altogether, the DSEC produced about 50 papers in peer-reviewed journals, six theses, and countless contributions to international congresses and meetings. Most of this output concerned research on the outcome of the epilepsy of these children. Without aiming for completeness, we can mention the outcome after a single unprovoked seizure (Stroink), the outcome of newly diagnosed epilepsy (Arts, Geerts), the outcome after withdrawal of AEDs (Brouwer, Peters, Geerts), mortality (Brouwer, Callenbach), quality of life and psychosocial outcome (Carpay, Geerts), cognitive outcome (Geerts, Oostrom, Peters, Schouten), outcome predictability (Arts, Boerrigter, Geelhoed, Geerts), and intractability (Arts, Geerts).

Many of the contributions were realized only after intensive collaboration by and discussions with experts in the field like Carol and Peter Camfield, Anne Berg, Shlomo Shinnar, Matti Sillanpää, David Chadwick, Richard Appleton and many, many others. The 25th anniversary of the DSEC for us marked an excellent occasion to acknowledge their contributions and express our gratitude for it.

The background of the workshop was on the one hand the availability of many outcome data from cohort studies, trials and other studies on (treatment of) childhood-onset epilepsy. We felt that a state-of-the-art survey of the available data was now timely. On the other hand, it had already become clear that our knowledge on outcome of childhood epilepsy in general and of specific types of epilepsy and of treatment modalities in particular is as yet by far insufficient to base sound, evidence-based treatment strategies on. The workshop therefore also aimed to identify the lacuna's in our knowledge and define research topics in this area for the years to come.

We really enjoyed three days of exciting discussions, and we hope that the readers of this book will agree with us that altogether, this is a state-of-the-art review as good and as up-to-date as one can get.

We are very grateful for having had the opportunity to organize this workshop. Our thanks go especially to Alexis Arzimanoglou, editor-in-chief of *Epileptic Disorders*, who opened up the possibility to embed the workshop within the “Progress in Epileptic Disorders” series, and was of great help with the content and organization, and to the other two members of the scientific committee, Carol and Peter Camfield. And of course, this also gives us the opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the enduring friendship, trust and hospitality we experienced from “The Camfields” during many years!

We thank all speakers and discussants who did such a great job, especially those who wrote a chapter and later revised it, incorporating the remarks and suggestions made during the sometimes heavy discussions. Special thanks go to Mrs. Florence Marsy from ANT Congress who did all the practical organizational work and to UCB Pharma for their continuing support for the “Progress in Epileptic Disorders” workshops. We gratefully acknowledge their unrestricted educational grant.

Finally, we also wish to thank John Libbey Eurotext Editions and their editor, Mrs Anne Chevalier, for their help in publishing this book soon after the workshop, eliminating our textual and linguistic mistakes.

Willem F. Arts, Oebele F. Brouwer

Outcome of Childhood Epilepsies Progress in Epileptic Disorders Workshop The Hague, The Netherlands November 2012

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