It is now known that most carcinogens and some drugs used in cancer therapy require host metabolism. Many chemicals and drugs are also detoxified by host metabolism. From 1956–1965, important contributions by several independent groups demonstrated that these metabolic enzyme systems have a basal constitutive level, which can be increased, often considerably, through induction of synthesis by certain chemicals. Early on, the unexpected observation was made that feeding one carcinogen, 3-methylcholanthrene, to rats inhibited the hepatocarcinogenicity of another carcinogen, an aminoazopyrazine dye (Cancer Res., 12: 356, 1952). Conney and the Miller group in the United States discovered the underlying mechanism, namely, that 3-methylcholanthrene induces the synthesis of enzymes in the liver that detoxify the dye through N-demethylation and azo group reduction (Cancer Res., 16: 450, 1956). They further demonstrated that 3-methylcholanthrene or benzo(a)pyrene induced the synthesis of benzo(a)pyrene-hydroxylating enzymes in liver microsomes, essentially a substrate-induced synthesis, enhancing mammalian foreign compound metabolism (J. Biol. Chem., 228: 753, 1957). The incidental observation was made that carbon monoxide blocked the N-demethylation activity (Cancer Res., 17: 628, 1957), and others showed that the carbon monoxide-binding cytochrome P-450 enzymes were involved (J. Biol. Chem., 237: 1375, 1962; Cancer Res. cover, December 1, 1988). Conney et al. also observed that phenobarbital and several un-

Thus, independent groups clarified the mechanisms of action of drugs in general, especially in relation to drug-drug interactions causing beneficial or adverse effects, the development of tolerance to drugs, and their addictive effects. Families of inducible drug-metabolizing enzymes have been identified (Annu. Rev. Biochem., 49: 315, 1980; Cancer Res., 48: 2946, 1988). The roles of these inducible enzymes include not only pathways of detoxification but also means of toxification by activation of carcinogens and drugs [Cancer (Phila.), 47: 2327, 1981]. Many of these effects have been observed in humans, e.g., altered enzyme levels from exposure to cigarette smoke or certain dietary factors (Cancer Res., 42: 4875, 1982; Pharm. Z., 133: 9, 1988; Jpn. J. Cancer Res., 78: 297, 1987).

Shown are James A. Miller and the late Elizabeth Miller, Van Rensselaer Potter Emeritus Professors of Oncology, McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison (top center); Allan H. Conney, State of New Jersey Professor of Pharmacology and Chairman, Department of Chemical Biology and Pharmacognosy, College of Pharmacy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (bottom center); Herbert K. Remmer, Professor Emeritus, Institut für Toxicologie, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen (bottom left); and Ryuichi Kato, Chairman, Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, Keio University, Tokyo (top left). The figures illustrate the 3-methylcholanthrene-induced azo dye N-demethylation and reductase (1956) and the substrate-induced benzo(a)pyrene metabolism (1957).

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