

PREFACE

In order to conquer cancers, various attempts have been made; early detection, surgery, irradiation, and chemotherapy using more than 100 anticancer agents and combinations thereof. In spite of these endeavors, the 5-yr survival rate still lingered around 40% in the late 1970s. At that time, a few Korean scientists knowing such limitation in cancer treatment came to the conclusion that the only way to get the load off cancers counts on the primary prevention by means of non-toxic natural products. And thus, they tried to find a non-toxic chemopreventives from dietary components, phytochemicals, and medicinal plants as a source for chemopreventives. After more than two decades since then, chemoprevention has become a most promising strategy to reduce cancer risk.

Insam (ginseng) has already been used for more than two thousand years since this plant was known to make our body energetic and keep stamina up, and extend longevity. For the last two decades, this action of Insam learned from experience have driven many scientists to study its chemopreventive effects, using different disciplines such as experimental anticarcinogenesis, epidemiology, biochemistry, molecular biology, and clinical medicine. Due to these efforts, much knowledge on this action of Insam has been accumulated. Now, it is time to review the accumulated knowledge. Fortunately, we held a very timely meeting on April 20, 2001 in Seoul that was the International Symposium on Cancer Prevention of Insam. Luckily, the articles presented in this meeting were published as Supplement December, 2001 of *Journal of Korean Medical Science*.

The Supplement contains Brief Introduction of Insam, Experimental and Epidemiological Basis of Cancer Prevention of Insam, Biochemistry of Insam Saponins, Molecular Mechanism of Action of Insam, and Chemopreventive Effects on Various Organs.

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