

Insuficiencia cardíaca. Datos para el debate

Edited by E. de Teresa Galván, M. Anguita Sánchez. Madrid: Editorial Médica Panamericana, 2002; 292 págs., 44 figures, and 49 tables. ISBN: 84-7903-736-9.

It is always gratifying to have a chance to read a book of reasonable length that explores an important subject in depth and brings us up to date on it, while being well-written and easy to read. All of this applies to the textbook on heart failure that was edited by de Teresa Galván and Anguita Sánchez in a flawless publication by Editorial Panamericana.

Each of the book's 18 co-authors is a recognized authority in his or her field of expertise. This makes for a novel approach in which every chapter not only lays out what is currently known and critiques the studies from which this knowledge stems, but also raises questions that remain unanswered, which are undeniably numerous, so that they may guide us along the path future research should follow to come up with the answers.

Chapter 1, by Jordi Soler-Soler, is a thought-provoking piece which leads us «from clinical trials to the real world» and questions whether «we are really changing the prognosis in patients with heart failure.» In looking at the future, it makes the striking claim that «curing heart failure is a lost battle.» The chapters that follow are devoted to the evidence in favor of different treatment approaches, yet they also raise questions about them. Thus, authors question

whether the traditional drug digitalis should still be used today, whether we are using diuretics appropriately in our patients, what the role of aldosterone receptor antagonists should be, what doses of angiotensin-converting-enzyme (ACE) inhibitors can be considered effective, and so on.

Because of their importance, attention should be drawn to the chapters where Anguita Sánchez discusses the use of beta-blockers for treating this syndrome, a subject of current debate, and where de Teresa Galván deals with thrombotic events, anticoagulants, sudden death, and cardiac arrhythmias.

There are also other chapters on topics of current interest, such as cytokines, the immune system and state-of-the-art treatment approaches (Navarro-López), as well as heart transplants (Crespo Leiro), with this last chapter including a brief but excellent overview of cellular cardiomyoplasty, pacemakers and ventricular resynchronization (Alzueta Rodríguez and Barrera Cordero), circulatory devices (Pulpón-Rivera et al.), and surgery (Cuenca Castillo).

The last 2 chapters deal with topics of special interest: diastolic heart failure (Ortigosa Aso and Silva Melchor) and heart failure units (Atienza Fernández).

In short, this is a book that every Spanish-speaking cardiologist should read without delay.

Branco Mautner

Departamento de Docencia e Investigación. Instituto de Cardiología y Cirugía Cardiovascular de la Fundación Favaloro, Buenos Aires, Argentina.